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Pilgrims to the Isles of Penance

Pilgrims to the Isles of Penance

Orchid Gathering in the East

By

Mrs. Talbot Clifton

With Fifty-four Illustrations and a Map

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ERRATA

Page 180 Read "of" before "which" at line 6

Page 246 (Illustration) Read "Lointaine" for "Louitaine"

Page 247 Read "Sanlanyor" for "Selanjor" at line 2 and in Index

Page 279 Read "Young" for "Hope" at line 5

Page 304 Read "Bibles" for "elements" at line 4 from end

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TO

TALBOT CLIFTON

THAT WANDERER WITH WHOM I HAVE ENJOYED
THE WEST AND THE EAST
AND WITH WHOM I ANTICIPATE IN TIME EXPLORING
REALMS UNKNOWN AND PLANETS UNNUMBERED
I DEDICATE THIS—
THE FIRST-BORN OF MY PEN

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Foreword

MONET, the great French impressionist, painted a series of fifteen pictures, the subject of each of which was two haystacks. Each time he portrayed them in a different light, showing them in the dawn, the day, the evening and the mist. I have felt that, were I an artist, I too would like to paint one scene in many different ways, delineating the view as I should imagine that a child would see it, a girl, a yokel, an artist, a woman from Mayfair, and a man from one of those fearful parts of a great city where vice appears unveiled and poverty has not wherewithal to cover her nakedness. To one the landscape would seem a fairy tale, to another merely dull, to a third a wilderness, to a fourth the ordinary, well-observed setting of daily life. My idea is that in art and, of course, in literature a true presentation of anything at all into which individuality is carried must be interesting. There should be an autobiography written typical of every class and caste: even the life histories of crossing-sweepers or cowmen would be of interest, were they true—true, that is, to those things which lie beneath the surface in every man—and recounted with an insight that would plumb the wells of experience and of feeling.

In this book, therefore, I shall attempt to show *how* we saw those places in which we travelled and what manner of persons we were who thus saw them, and in order to do so I shall first sketch a rough outline of him with whom I went on this orchid pilgrimage, that I may briefly portray the mettle of the cicerone who took me off the beaten track that circles the globe, and who wandered with me into the forests and jungles where grow the exotics that we love—flowers that were the Golconda of our aspirations, and for which we journeyed in isles of penance and seas of pearl, and in lands where "the sun goes up."

Of the Lure of Orchids
and
Where first We sought Them

"Oh, Friend," my bosom said,
"Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red.

"All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth,
And is the mill round of our fate,
A sun path in thy worth."

EMERSON

Pilgrims to the Isles of Penance

CHAPTER I

THE EXPLORER

"There's a Legion that never was 'listed,
That carries no colour or crest,
But, split in a thousand detachments,
Is breaking the road for the rest."
KIPLING: *The Seven Seas* ("The Lost Legion").

My husband had been an explorer, who, for nearly twenty years, had wandered alone where men seldom go. He had watched the waves of the Arctic Ocean beating against Siberia, and had wended his way to the Glacial Sea, travelling by the great Lena River, which no Englishman had ever navigated before him. He saw the wild swans that nest on its banks and the geese which do not know man enough even to fear him. He came upon two great fields of edelweiss that stretch along by the river and are as white with flowers as though the snow were upon them; for in that part of Siberia the plains are as high as are the mountain altitudes of Europe, and, therefore, they bear the same vegetation as do the Alps in the springtime.

He visited Irkutsk, which in those days was the terminus of the railway, and thence he proceeded by horse-sleighs for two thousand miles to Yakutsk, where is a trading people whose civilization is claimed by them to be older than that of the Jews.[1] They wear clothes almost equally composed of furs and of silver, and feed upon horses and drink much tea.

Imagine those two thousand silent miles, the bells on the ponies alone breaking the noiselessness of those vast solitudes during many days and nights—for he travelled by moon and by sun till he had covered the distance between Irkutsk and Yakutsk. The pleasure of hearing wheels crunching on an English road, when he returned months later to civilization, was, he has told me since, immense—incredibly so to the many who had never longed for sound, though they might have sighed for solitude.

In Siberia he discovered a sheep hitherto unknown to naturalists. This animal, which resembles considerably an *ovis poli*, was named after him, and a specimen of it, procured by him, is now in the Natural History Museum in London. He was also the first to let the world know of the wonderful mammoth which was discovered by a Tutchka native in Northern Siberia, and which was afterwards brought back entire by Professor Hertz and is now in the Museum in St. Petersburg.

In 1898, four years previous to these Siberian experiences, he had marched from Cape Town to

[1] See pp. 37–38, *From Paris to New York by Land*, by De Windt.



J. Talbot Clifton

(After the Painting by F. Copnall, of Liverpool.

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near the Mountains of the Moon, travelling by a route unknown even to the Arabs, who avoided it on account of the tribesmen whose country it traversed. Stanley himself had in those parts kept to the routes used by the Arabs, but this savoured somewhat of the beaten track, so, against all advice, the explorer followed this untravelled way. He had meant to go to Cairo, but black-water fever overcame him and he only just escaped with his life. There was with him no white man upon that journey.

He was accustomed to receive goats for food from each tribe through whose territory he travelled, and in exchange he gave the chief some "poscho" —goods, consisting mainly of cotton fabrics and gaily coloured prints. One chief, however, sent no goats, so the Explorer knew that he was not welcomed to that strange land. He accordingly put a bottle in a tree some forty yards from his tent, and waited till the chief and his followers came to parley with him. His interpreter translated their dialect into Swahili, but the message was not reassuring. The chief and his men sat down on the sun-scorched grass and intimated by word and gesture that he had better continue his journey without delay, leaving behind him his native carriers and his "poscho." This he absolutely refused to do, upon which the chief became insistent. The moment for action had arrived, so, taking up his big elephant gun—a weapon unknown in that part of Africa, it not being a vicinity where game abounds—he shot above the heads of the tribesmen and brought down

the bottle, which shivered into many pieces, scattering glass amongst the astonished natives. Fortunately the chief cut his foot upon a splinter, and then the fear of the white man entered into him. During several days following this one of strange event, a lean goat was sent to my husband by a messenger, who in return took back with him boracic ointment for the healing of the wounded member. After a few days' rest the travellers went forward to fresh adventures and experiences.

Perhaps his most unique experience was the year which he spent alone with the Esquimaux by and beyond Hudson's Bay and north of Chesterfield Inlet. He went amongst them seeking remnants of Franklin's Expedition, slight traces of which he did discover. He took up also pamphlets with pictures of balloons that he might find out if the natives there had ever seen the ill-starred André, but, after a long conclave and after having invented a name for the strange conveyance, the Esquimaux declared that it had not been seen by them. There he shot a musk ox and brought home its strange head, so unlike that of any other animal. My husband's reason for having lived so long with these remote people was that he was snowed up and unable to return to less solitary regions. He therefore made his home in snow houses and ate raw meat, there being no timber or firewood at all. He dressed in clothes similar to those worn by the natives, garments which were made of reindeer skin and sewn together with bone and fibre. One of Talbot Clifton's adventures that winter was, on

waking up one night, to hear the Esquimaux discussing amongst themselves whether or no it would be advisable to kill him. He quietly joined in the conversation and pointed out to them how much more profitable it would be for them to protect him until the spring and then to take him back to Hudson's Bay, since there he would give them presents of guns and other goods; whereas, if they now destroyed him, they would reap so very little advantage from his decease. His logic turned his audience to his own point of view, and they spared his life.

In 1906 he went to seek for hidden treasure in the Galapagos Islands. A few years before he sailed for that isle of buried ore, a British admiral had also been desirous of discovering something of value there, and had, on an official cruise, put in at Galapagos with his man-of-war and set all his sailors to digging for the fabled wealth. The Admiralty, upon hearing of his charming originality, did not, unfortunately, reward or encourage him, but, on the contrary, compelled him to abandon the search, and the treasure remained as buried as before—if treasure there ever was. Neither did the Explorer solve the question as to its reality, for, owing to his crew mutinying, he left his work for a revolution in Guayaquil, the port of Ecuador, and after landing there and seeing many of the population shot down from mere force of habit (for revolutions are but habits in South America) and having also gone through a considerable earthquake, he proceeded to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, which is situated

in the mountains at a height of over 9000 feet. The jungles there are draped with orchids.

Some six months later he came to Peru, and there we met. I was living in that "Land of Gold" with my father, who was British Minister to Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and who had passed several years in Lima, the capital of Peru. Sometimes the country round this city is worthy of that ancient nomenclature, which the Spaniards bestowed upon its more distant parts, but, when quoting this title, I do not, like the Castilians, designate the hidden ore which brought about the doom of the Inca ruler, but instead I think only of the yellow *plantagenista*, the gift of the sun, which luminary the people of Peru once worshipped as their deity. There was so little that was beautiful near Lima that this remembrance of the time of the broom stands out clearly in my thoughts of our life there.

Talbot and I went home and were married, and then began a sort of artistic renaissance in my life. He had always collected pictures, and thereby we came into contact with several artists at home and abroad; music also we pursued, and, after lean years of artistic starvation in the far west, these pleasures came tenfold more beautifully than they otherwise would have done. For two years we lived thus, settling down to the quiet life of an English landlord, when the orchids, which had been steadily increasing in my husband's collection, awoke in him the "Wanderlust." Their scents and colours and forms spoke of the tropics and of wild places,

unknown save to a few, until we had to follow their lure and start upon an orchid pilgrimage. We wished to see them growing and to collect them ourselves—and to perhaps find an unnamed species.

It was in the month of February, 1909, that we started, within a week of having fallen before the sudden temptation of the exotics. Their soft persuasion had encompassed what the rough winds had tried to do; for often at night, when they sobbed and moaned round the house, my husband would say that they were calling him out, and urging him to leave the unaccustomed shelter of the house and to go wandering once again. I would contend that he did not hear aright, and that the sorrowful sound but testified to the joy of home and proved the desolation of the blast lamenting outside. He had resisted, therefore, the call of the siren winds, but the orchids had us in thrall.

In the East the hot weather had already set in, but we neither of us minded that, so, sadly leaving our two little "anchors" in the care of our trusted agent, we went East in the P. and O. steamer *Malwa*, then on her maiden voyage.

CHAPTER II

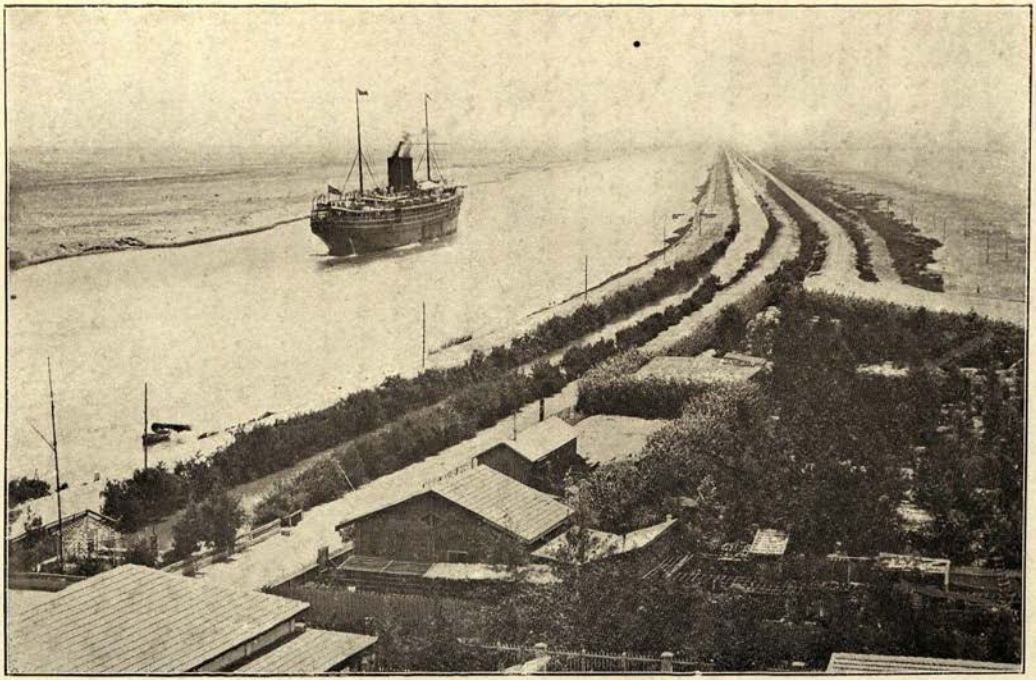
CALCUTTA

"Let him go where he will, he will find only so much beauty or worth as he carries."[1]—EMERSON.

ONE or two impressions stand out sharply, marking the journey. The arrival at Port Said was striking, for the day was just ending as we passed the statue of Count Lesseps, which marshals ships in to his great achievement—the Canal of Suez. It made me remember rather sadly that other statue raised to him at Colon, the effigy which marks the grave of his hopes, and which stands pathetically on the Isthmus of Panama, which isthmus he was never to cut.

By the side of the newer railway line out there, the old French trucks and engines still stand, thick, tropical creeper overgrowing the out-of-date machinery, whilst now in the distance is heard the blasting of the new waterway. The wheels of the train seem to hum a dirge; for every sleeper that they pass over is, as it were, a *memento mori;* as each one, from the number of men who lost their lives in this endeavour, might be taken to represent a labourer who died of fever. As many corpses lie buried

[1] The authoress found convicts and savages.



THE SUEZ CANAL AT PORT SAID

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in that sod as there are blocks of wood upon the line.

Night fell as we anchored at Port Said, and then was pictured a scene verily Dantesque; barges laden with coal were anchored around us, wherein worked Arabs, lighted by torches and flaming cauldrons. They ran down narrow planks into the black cargo, heaving it into buckets, and then speeding back to the ship. In their drapery, lit by the stars and the red glow of the flames, it was a picture for Whistler or Wasley[1] to have painted.

The Suez Canal has its poetry always. Delightful is the quiet of gliding through it after the swirl and rush of the sea; and the long stretches of sand, with the occasional camels and Arabs, the evening light, the sedges and the few trees are all woven in with one's thoughts of this historical desert—the very sands crossed by Mary and the Child, by Antony journeying to Cleopatra, by Moses and the slaves!

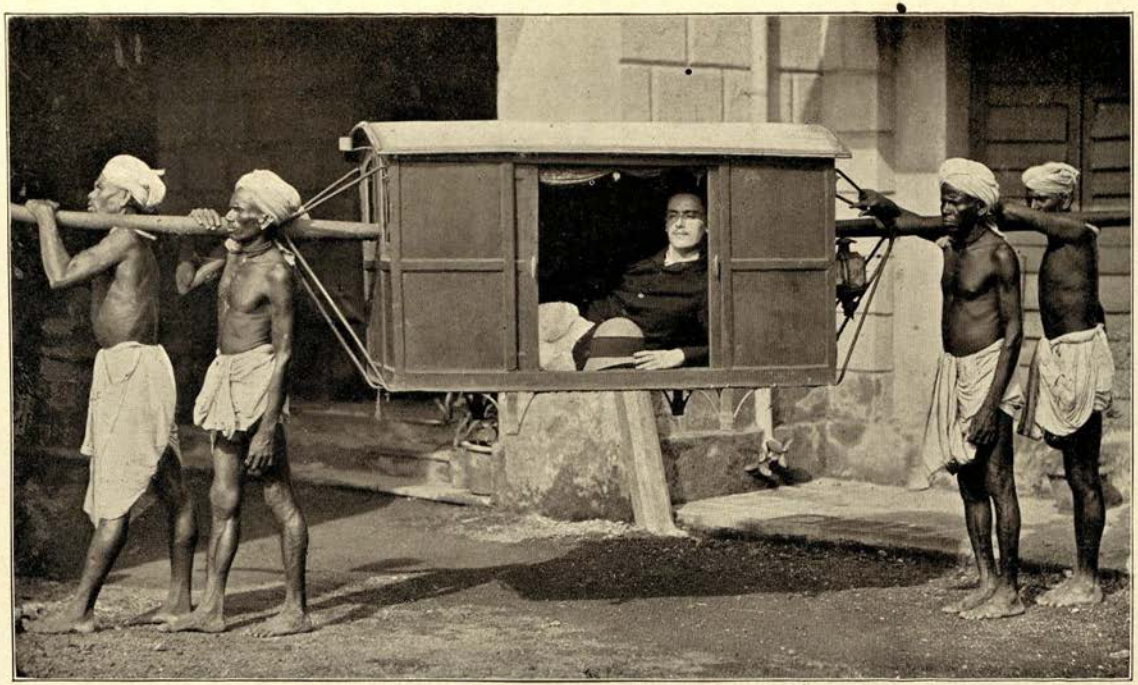
At Aden only one of the senses is appealed to—and that the first—for the coffee, thick, fragrant, Turkish-made Mocca coffee, is nectar indeed. There we changed for the *Salsette*, a smaller ship, and sailed for Bombay, and thence journeyed across the flat, unlovely country which stretches on to Calcutta, a tiring journey of about fifty-eight hours, during which time one gets strange momentary views of Indian life—glimpses of evening meetings by the well, of early ablutions in the river, and of the grey, bare, hideous, fascinating buffaloes, drawing carts

[1] A young artist whose Turneresque water-colours, should, in the near future, bring him fame.

full of festive women and children, clad like flowers in a summer border and shining with tinsel and gold. Naked ascetics arrest one's thoughts for a minute, glorious flowering trees divert them, thin pariah dogs arouse pity, wonderful, shining birds excite one's admiration. So, wondering and admiring, and suffering with the heat and dust and tedium, one speeds across the centre of the great Empire of the East.

Our first expedition was, of course, to the Botanical Gardens, and Captain Gage, the Curator, very kindly took us round these beautiful grounds in his motor, showing us several things of great interest. Amongst other striking trees there is a great Banyan, which glories in eight hundred and fifty-three aerial roots. The branches send long trailers downwards, which take root and cover an immense quantity of ground, so that indeed a regiment could shelter under the canopy of green, supported by its strange and manifold columns.

Another curious tree is the *Sterculia alata*, or Mad tree, every leaf of which is differently formed, and none of which are correctly shaped. Here one would be lop-sided, whilst another was almost round, a third would be marred with holes, a fourth altogether mis-shapen. This tree is an abnormal growth, the seeds of which, however, produce perfectly orthodox plants, though the cuttings, naturally, always result in further botanical curiosities. An ingenious, if ignorant, American female, in a book written on her trippings and tourings, accounted for the peculiarities of the Mad tree by saying that on



A Purdah Conveyance

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the original tree about thirty other kinds had been grafted, and that this verdant deformity was the result.

A pretty legend is attached to another unique tree in these gardens, namely the *Ficus Krishna*, almost, if not quite, the only specimen of its kind, and venerated as holy by the natives. The leaves have their lobes joined together, and folded up towards the centre into somewhat the form of an open envelope. It is said that Krishna, friend of the milkmaids, was petitioned to help them in their work, much of which consisted in wrapping up pats of butter with leaves folded into squares. Krishna therefore created the sacred fig-tree that their labour might be lessened, only one bend being necessary to enfold the butter in this unique and miraculous leaf.

The golf-links and Eden Zoological Gardens of Calcutta are charming, and some of the outlying native parts very picturesque, bordering, as they do, the narrow river with its curiously-shaped boats. In these streets are seen queer wooden boxes about 4 ft. 6 in. by about 3 ft. 6 in., fixed on to poles—a very comfortable and humane means of transport for fowls, one thinks, on first seeing them; but when one realizes that they are purdah conveyances for probably several women cramped up in the dark, one can but wonder at them as an uncomfortable mode of twentieth-century locomotion.

The pitiful, vulgar little monument, erected by a former Viceroy to mark the place of the Black Hole, is only matched in ugliness by the hideous deed it

commemorates; but most of the other statues, of which there are many, are a great improvement on this, though, being in honour of viceroys and generals, all of whom seem to have ridden large and fiery stallions, they look a little as though they had been put up by contract for so much a dozen.

One of the most noted places of native interest in Calcutta is the Kali Ghat, the temple built in honour of Kali, the goddess of destruction. The priest who took us round the ugly, squalid courts, talked metaphysically of the destroying aspect of God, one of the triune facets, as it were, of the Trinity, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Creator being the completing two of the mystic triangle. One felt, however, that, to the masses at least, Kali was not this abstract and mystical idea, but a cruel goddess, delighting in bloodshed, which presumption was fortified when, in the chief court, we came upon twenty headless goats. It was their idea of sacrifice, the best offering they could think of; and certainly no orthodox Christian should cavil at these sacrifices, since that people, the very records of whose history they regard as sacred, rejoiced during their days of favouritism with the Deity in similarly sanguine offerings, barbarities which, fortunately, in these the days of their downfall they have ceased to perpetrate. Kali worship has degenerated very largely into sex worship, the revolting practices of which undermine the character of the Bengalese, who, though quick of intellect, are effete and emasculated to a degree.

I heard in Calcutta some interesting little details

of three women, known both East and West. One, Miss Cornelia Seraliji, is the Parsee lady barrister, whose charming books, *Love and Life behind the Purdah* and *The Sun Babies* have made her name a familiar one in England. She is doing most interesting work in India by dedicating herself and her great acquirements to the good of the women there, who, ignorant of law and outside matters, are entirely in the hands and at the mercy of the men. They are often shamelessly defrauded, and to them, both rich and poor, a champion like Miss Cornelia Seraliji is a very Portia and does incalculable good. She is intensely loyal to the British, but, going as she does amongst natives of all classes and denominations, and hearing many things that no European would ever be told, she considers the present state of Bengalese unrest most serious, and was in fear and trembling before the recent Viceregal wedding lest evil that had been spoken of should be performed. In her own garden she found the heads of goats—a sign of destruction, which so terrified her servants that they left her in a body. She took it as a threat to herself, given in anger at her friendliness for the white man.

My next gleanings were apropos of Miss Noble—Sister Nivedetta—who wrote the so charming book *The Web of Indian Life*, which, however, like some other books written about the East, is perhaps better read at home, the authoress having given the *spirit* of the faith and ideals of the people just as Fielding Hall has done for Burma in *The Soul of a People;* but the spirit of a people's in-

spiration and the actual lives of that people are so sadly different from each other in all nations that one is apt to be misled by these idealistic books. It is as though one took the Grail Stories according to Tennyson as actual presentments of the everyday lives of the knights of the sixth century.

Miss Noble is by birth an Irishwoman, but by choice a Hindu; she lives in a bazaar, dresses and eats like a native, and dances in the sacred processions, even in the "Holi," the Bacchanalian feast of Spring, in which she sees nothing but the rightful rejoicing of men and women in their powers of reproduction; but which, degraded by the people, has become a loathsome orgy of loose passions and impurities.

Of Annie Besant, the third of my garland, and, of course, by far the most outstanding, I heard a rather charming little incident. She was lunching with the Viceroy's secretary, then Colonel now Sir James Dunlop Smith and his sister, and a young Sikh officer was present. The latter, of course, could have had no sympathy with her theosophical work, but her personality so arrested his imagination that afterwards he said of her, "She is no woman; she is a goddess!"—rather a wonderful tribute for a young man to pay to a woman old enough to be his grandmother, without beauty of face or figure, though with the manners —as someone amusingly said—of a pope.

The Viceroy and Lady Minto were most kind and hospitable, and to them we owed the fulfilment of our wish to go to the Andaman Isles—

Lady Eileen pleaded our cause, and Lord Minto's kindness in giving us letters to those in authority made our way in Burma and the Isles one of "Roses, roses all the way," or rather of "Orchids, orchids."

The Viceregal Palace is a very fine building, with much exquisite marble and an air of stateliness and beauty, and is a fitting setting to the great office of the Viceroy.

CHAPTER III

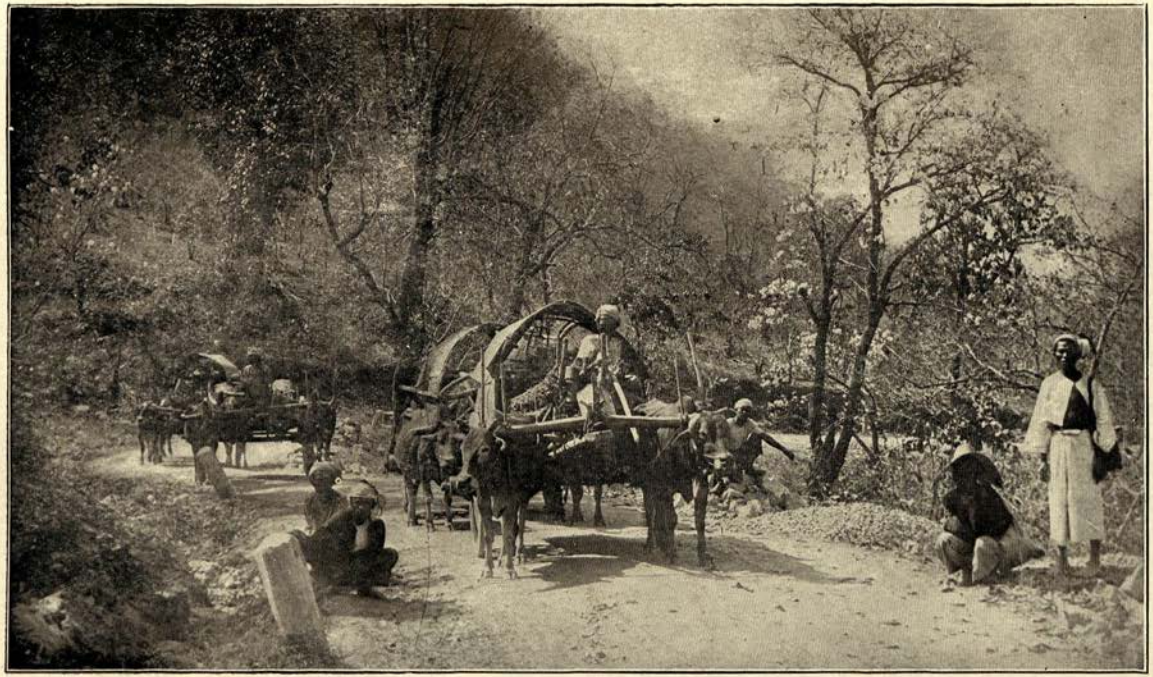
BURMA

"We are led to believe a lie
When we see with, not *through* the eye."

BLAKE.

LEAVING Calcutta, we took passage to Rangoon, where we spent a few days in the absurdly expensive hotel run by a family of Armenians, who also manage or mismanage one at Singapore and another at Penang, and who are building a palatial caravanserai at Calcutta. We were surprised, not knowing "el costumbre del pais"—the famous idiom of South Americans, with which they explain away their most curious customs—at receiving, a few days after our arrival, an invitation from the Lieutenant-Governor to breakfast at nine o'clock. After debating whether pyjamas and a nightdress would not be the most suitable attire for that hour, we decided against them, and went on our way to the charming residence of Sir Thirtle White.

The moon being full, there was a "Powe" at night, the great yearly feast which is held at the pagoda; whilst lesser festivities, celebrating the full moon, take place monthly at the smaller pagodas. We first drove through an avenue golden with



BURMESE BULLOCK CARTS

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padouks in blossom, those wonderful trees that burst into flower in a few hours and transform Rangoon into a sudden miracle of beauty, and so we reached the charming gardens, the waters of which are bordered thickly with masses of *burgainvillia.* During the beautiful, brief time of the sun's setting we watched the bullock carts coming up the hill towards the pagoda. They were full of girls with flowers in their hair and clothed with a silken lower garment called "lungi," a sort of draped petticoat tied in front. They wear also white or coloured coats, which, except when they are made of transparent material, effectually hide the form of the wearer; but, as most Burmese women have but indifferent figures, this concealment does not detract from their charms. When a Burmese girl is pretty, she is remarkably so, with a beautiful skin and big dark eyes, and the most charming expression. Her black hair is well smoothed with oil and coiled up on her head, making an ebony frame for the ivory of her face. In her tresses she always wears a coronal of flowers, usually of jasmine or of some delicate orchid.

Outside the great pagoda, Shway Dagon, refreshment sellers squatted on the ground, their fruits and sweets and syrups displayed in the light of torches and lanterns; and great was the merriment, for a Burmese gathering, where the women are as free to enjoy themselves as the men, is full of sparkle and animation. Indeed, all went merry as a marriage bell beneath the golden

pinnacles that glowed in the last colours of the twilight.

Leaving these outer festivities, we climbed up the hundred steps that lead to the great golden central pagoda, and to the shrines grouped round it. These steps were bordered by stalls, set out with candles for the devout, with pictures of the Lord of Compassion, and with flowers to offer at his shrines. Marybuds also were being sold in long chains of gold, and tuberoses, sweeter smelling than incense, to hold up in adoration; crimson *hibiscus* also, to show how the heart bleeds for the fulfilment of prayer.

The Chinese have set up arches over the steps, where even the Hindu may rest, for no one is more tolerant than the Burmese disciples of him who never claimed to be the only way.

The great court, set on these hundred steps, is jewelled with little shrines of gold, in which are serene marble Buddhas. Bigger temples there are too, bordered with raised carvings and filigree work, and with great bronze images in the centre, before which men and women bow down to the ground. In one shrine is a curious series of pictures entitled "Life and Death," tracing the growth and decay of the physical body from the 'mewling, puking' infant onwards to the child, the youth and the ancient man, stooping and bent, as though the earth were already drawing him down to her final embrace; showing also the corpse, and again the corpse after many days, when the dead, so-called, has given life to

lower forms. The white man shudders and turns away, and thinks the pictures brutal and fearsome things; but to the Burman, who knows that *he* is not his body, these pictures are no more terrible than would be to us the pages of an old-time book of fashion, showing the in-coming and the out-going of trunk-hose or of armour—for to him the flesh is but a garment which varies with each incarnation, just as the fashion in dress changes according to the period of the wearer.

Many beautiful buildings stand hedging in the great central pagoda, the glittering structure covered with pure gold leaf, round which the others have grown through all the centuries of the Christian era. It is supposed that precious jewels lie under this ancient pagoda, behind which stands "the elder brother," a shining witness to the Gautama, raised before the greater Shway Dagon was built.

There is also the sacred well, where Buddha washed his hair; and, in a case, a tiger, which in 1902 came and sat quietly on the pagoda steps, and seemed without fierceness, so that the Burmese said, and still say, that it was a *nat* (a spirit) clothed as a beast—but the British had it shot. (It was, of course, most extraordinary that a tiger should come into the city.) In Buddhism proper there is no worship of *nats*, this cult being entirely at variance with true Buddhism, which, though it admits hierarchies of *devas* (or angels) and of lower spirits, yet does not countenance any homage or acknowledg-

ment made to these lesser entities. *Nat* worship is the survival of the belief of the people prior to the enlightenment of Buddhism; it would, therefore, date from before B.C. 240. These spirits have shrines raised to them in each village—structures often no bigger than a cage, which are placed in trees. These are propitiatory, and intended to keep at bay the malevolent powers.

The entire mass of wonderful buildings is most impressive, whilst the worship in the open air and the whole feeling of the great court is very poetical and elevated.

There are besides beautiful verdant enclosures, of which one only sees the tree-tops when looking down from the level of the great pagoda. They comprise the arsenal and the magazine, and are only entered by officials, and in case of insurrection would form a retreat for the non-militant members of the European community.

We had the added pleasure of seeing these things with a Burmese scholar to instruct us, a Mr. Shwe Gan Oung, who is now aiding a lady at Oxford to write a book on Buddhism, which should shortly appear. Being intensely interested in all psychic matters, I asked him if he had ever witnessed any of the fruits of the asceticism practised by some of the Buddhist priests. He said that Buddha himself had decried such vigorous means of perfection, and had advocated "the middle way," and that amongst the Hindus the penalizing of self was far more usual than amongst the Buddhists. There were,

however, undoubted cases of healing by touch and by a special kind of massage practised by men who had attained power by great mental concentration. "You, in the West," he said, "began by hypnotizing, as you call it, another person's mind; we, in the East, first hypnotize our own brains, and we so concentrate our minds that they are able sometimes to discern those things which are generally veiled."

According to Mr. Bramwell, the great authority on hypnotism, the higher phenomena which sometimes arise from it are due to the secondary consciousness having power to act because the primary, everyday consciousness has been for the time obliterated. In cases of induced clairvoyance during hypnotism this contention would hold good, and also in those cases where cures for vice and bad habits have been effected. Occultists would say, in the same way, that the ordinary faculties of the mind being under subjection, the higher ones are able to function. In the converse cases of the subject of the experiment doing foolish things and becoming a tool for evil, the spiritual ego—according to them, undeveloped and almost non-existent in most people—would have been extruded from the body, and the subject would therefore be in the hands of the operator, unless he had made a previous effort to hold on to his higher self. The occultist says that, in the event of self-hypnotism, if the person operating upon himself is spiritually developed, he may attain to clairvoyance and to

greater knowledge, but that the danger of some external astral will dominating him is great, as most people are not perfect enough to be immune from such influence when under self-induced hypnotism.

The Burmese monks, however, to whom our friend referred, and of whom another Burman spoke to us, as will be shown later on, had probably attained to "Samadhi," which is a high condition of self-induced trance, during which the ego can ascend to planes far superior to the astral, which is the plane sometimes reached by a person during hypnotic trance. As the monks in Burma — so often rather incorrectly referred to as priests—live entirely for religion and for the unseen, it is natural that they should attain to powers above the man whose mind is altogether fixed on his present surroundings. The monks preach to the people at stated times, and are, as it were, the spiritual aristocracy of the masses, leading them in matters of religion ; but they are in no sense intermediaries between them and God as are the priests of the Christian Church.

This Burmese scholar told us also that metaphysics surround the Burmese child in the cradle, creep into its earliest fairy tales, and are woven, in sometimes grotesque patterns, through his whole life. He explained to us also about surnames in Burma, for these are not necessarily derived from either parent, but are usually a compound of both, with an individual one thrown in, whilst married



YOUNG BURMANS BEING INSTRUCTED BY THEIR MONKS

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women keep their fathers' names—a rather perplexing system, one would think.

. . . . . .

The damp heat in Rangoon is fearful: ninety-five degrees were registered when we were there in the comparatively cool and shaded vestibule of the hotel, with electric fans going all day, and the people congratulating themselves on the pleasantness of the season as compared with the previous year. Everything is alarmingly expensive also, and one feels really sorry for the British regiment stationed there, the officers of which have to pay the Government large sums for wretched wooden divisions, consisting of a bedroom and a corner of the verandah. They are, too, made to contribute larger water-rates than are the Chinese or Burmese in the town, though the Chinese are among the richest people in the community. My husband has a brother, Caryl Clifton, in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who was stationed at Rangoon at the time of our visit, and from him I gathered that soldiering in Burma is much less comfortable both for officers and men than it is in India.

In passing I must mention that we were very much indebted to the tender care of Groves, the mess sergeant of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, for many attentions and very great help. Without him I should have despaired of ever being able to regain possession of some diamonds which I had had sent out to Burma to meet me, the authorities having

decided in an arbitrary way that they were too valuable for personal use and must be for sale; and I very nearly had to pay over one-half of their total value as import duty, but by writing to Cæsar and generally worrying everyone I finally rescued them on a subsequent journey to Rangoon.

CHAPTER IV

ON SAINTS

"Is not all I possess, even to my very body, kept for the benefit of others."—NÂGÂNANDA.

CHRISTIANITY has reason to rejoice at her work in Burma, for—putting entirely aside her missionary endeavours, with which I cannot pretend to sympathize, though the missionaries themselves, especially the Catholics and Moravians, are often heroically self-sacrificing and fervent—she can claim to have done more to alleviate bodily suffering than any other belief that ever comforted or terrified mankind.

The Eastern faiths seem to eliminate entirely the succouring of the sick, which is possibly not the fault of the faith, but due merely to the people not being yet at that stage of their evolution—just as was the case in Europe in the early days of its history, when lepers were treated as pariahs, and were outcasts, unhelped and detested by the rest of the community.

It is amongst the lepers, however, that the Churches have done such a noble work, for in Burma alone there are four homes, run by Catholics, Baptists, and Wesleyans. In the home in Rangoon there are now one hundred and sixteen

patients, amongst whom are Europeans, Eurasians, Burmese, Chinese, and natives of India—in fact, half the nations of the world have there some suffering representative.

Amongst this afflicted throng is a dark-eyed, slim little Malay nun, clothed in her garments of renunciation, and infected by the fatal disease, which she has caught from those to whom she has ministered for years. Two European Catholic missionaries also conceal by their cheerful courage the fact that they are among the condemned.

Shady trees and pleasant paths intersperse the pavilions where live the patients, by whom is done nearly all the work of the home. Two cooks and four coolies are kept, and these are the only servants who are whole. Nine nuns of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary nurse the patients and dress their sores, and two doctors lend their aid occasionally when needed.

The most pressing question is, of course, whether or no leprosy can be cured. For two years Dr. Douglas has given a treatment called "Nastine" to the patients, but as, unfortunately, no cures have been effected, this will in a few months' time be discontinued.

During these two years another experiment has also been made on some of the patients. This consists of injections of serum prepared with the bacillus of leprosy. Great improvements in the general health of the patients and renewed strength have been the outcome of this attempt, and, though they are still uncured, they wish to continue with

the treatment, which Dr. Rost, of the Indian Medical Service, administers to them, and they still hope for a permanent cure.

One Sister, who became a leper through contact with the sick of this home, was cured by this very preparation, though the disease took five years to disappear. During all that time she was in the Hospital of St. Louis in Paris, where the injections were made.

Dr. Rost has been experimenting for six or seven years, as previously it had been deemed impossible to isolate the leprosy bacillus. Some time ago three American doctors cabled from the Hawaiian Islands, saying that they had discovered the cure for leprosy by isolating and cultivating this bacillus, but they had been forestalled in this by Dr. Rost—whom may success eventually reward!

The Catholic Leper Hospital in Mandalay is larger than this one in Rangoon which I have described. Truly the day of saints is not passed as long as men and women can be found to live and die in these sad homes of the stricken.

CHAPTER V

MANDALAY

"The longen folk to go on pilgrimages."—CHAUCER.

THE Explorer and I had decided to take the next steamer to the Andaman Isles. As this did not, however, sail until the 15th of March, we made up our minds on the 6th to fill in time by going to Mandalay, which we accordingly did at noon.

We had had to get permission, through the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, from the Chief Commissioner of the Andamans before going to these Isles, as there is only the Government Rest House in which to stay; the Chief Commissioner had cabled in reply that we could go to Port Blair, though he regretted being unable to put us up, as he had illness in his house. He also advised us to bring a cook.

One of the delights of travelling in the capricious way in which we did is the sudden making and changing of plans. Nothing is cut and dried; nothing is mapped out beforehand. We mean to go, say, to Vienna; but if, whilst waiting on the platform a luxurious car comes into the station, we jump into it and go wherever the destination of that train may happen to be. Journeying like this is much more amusing than the ordinary way,

though it is apt to annoy other people less erratic than oneself. Wandering in these untrodden ways makes rigid plans almost impossible in any case, as one is never sure of the dates for sailing or of getting one's connections anywhere.

At 6 a.m. next day we reached Mandalay, the journey up being flat and quite without interest. A Chinese shopkeeper, with whom my husband had had dealings in his previous visit to Mandalay, met us in his brougham and took us to the Tennasserim Hotel, where we were shown two rooms, each measuring fourteen feet by twelve, for which we were to be charged one pound each a day. Disgusted with such a foolish expectation on the part of the Eurasian manageress, we soon repacked our boxes, determining to go on that very afternoon to Bhamo, a small town which lies some way up the Irrawaddy, being situated in the northern part of Burma near the Chinese frontier line.

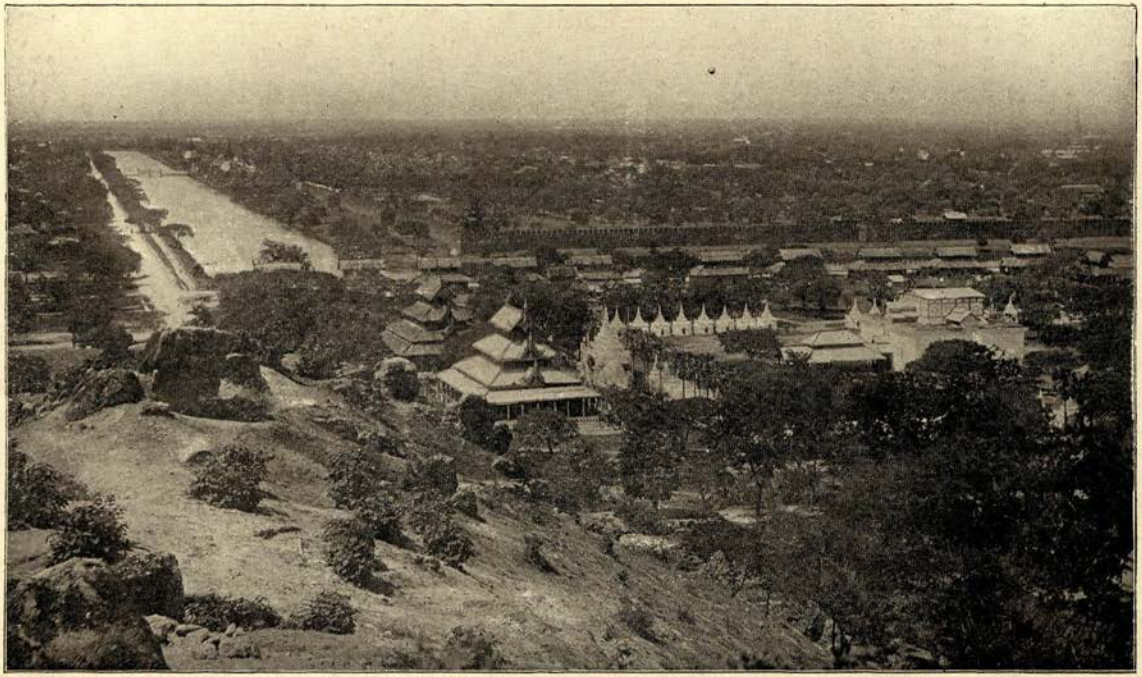
The landlady at the Tennasserim was very indignant at our hurried departure; but luck, I think, was turning against her, for we heard afterwards that an official inspector had just visited the hotel to see if it was in a proper state of repair, and she had, unfortunately for her, mistaken this gentleman for a mason for whom she had sent, and had shown him round, explaining that really the hotel was in a dangerous state of disrepair, pointing out the cracking walls and worm-eaten staircase, and telling him to patch things up as cheaply as possible, just whitening the sepulchre in order that the inspector of buildings might not see the ruin beneath the paint.

The Burmese palace in Mandalay, which King Theebaw was the last sovereign to inhabit, is disappointing, and is now rapidly becoming dilapidated, owing to its disuse. At one time it was turned into a club by the British, but Lord Curzon objected to its being put to this use, and decreed that it was to be merely a show place, in consequence of which it is uncared for, and will in time fall into complete ruin.

The Burmese have never compassed the luxuries and artistic delights, of which remains are found in India, notably in Delhi. Here no fountains play in sculptured courts, no invitation to refreshing coolness comes from marble baths, and the palace is merely rather a tawdry building in red and black wood with much gold leaf on the ceilings and pillars and inlaid ornamentations in crudely coloured glass over the entrances of the courts. It is divided into sections, amongst which are the House of the Throne-Room, the Dwelling of the Queen, the Place of the Concubines, and so forth.

The rose-red stone wall that runs round the palace and the garden, surmounted with pagoda-shaped gateways and towers, has a moat with running water below it on the outside, and is far older looking and finer than the palace. Its circumference is about six miles, and it makes a beautiful centre to the town.

Were there tongues in these stones, what a terrible tale of long-drawn-out agony they would tell; for the walls, which I should have called blood-red, have echoed the moans of victims who, while



VIEW OF MANDALAY
Shewing the Moat and the Red Wall

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still living, entered their tombs. At each of the four corners human beings have writhed and agonized, and met a death which lingered, for at every corner men have been buried alive. Their spirits, passing away in torment, are supposed to hover wrathfully around the scene of outrage, and to wait to make war on man. The sole reason of the barbarity was in order that the *nats* of the tortured might fight invaders and belligerents as they neared the terrible walls.

Our Chinese merchant friend promised to get coolies sent into the interior to collect orchids, and thus we got, in due course, some fifteen hundred collected; but though they arrived home safely, most of them were but ordinary dendrobiums, which species take rather longer to blossom freely after travelling than do most of the others.

In the old days pigs and dogs were the main factors in the cleanliness of Mandalay, and performed the office of scavenger, which the guardian angel of South American towns, the hideous buzzard, effects for many of the cities of the New World. These swine of Mandalay used to have a great abhorrence for the white man, and the boars frequently chased and even inflicted injuries upon him. The buffalo of Indian towns often evince this same dislike, and cannot bear to smell a European. Modern Mandalay does not, however, arrest one's attention as being a particularly dirty town.

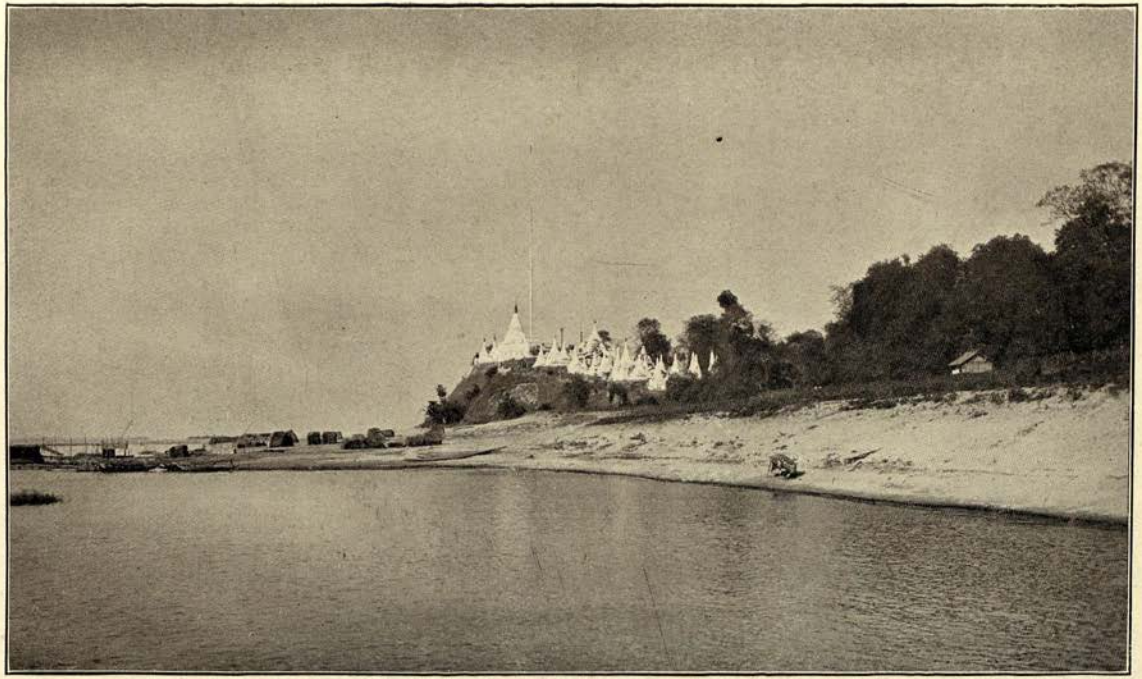
All its industries group themselves about in various quarters, one part being given over to the merchandise of silks and silver, whilst in another locality

various kinds of eatables will be displayed. This is a custom which holds good in many Eastern towns, but it happened to attract my notice especially in Mandalay.

We slept that night again in the train, reaching Kathan on the Irrawaddy early next day. The panorama here was very fine: innumerable white pagodas gleamed on the hills overlooking the river, in the waters of which women and children were laughing and splashing and swimming, or washing their silk and cotton "lungis" and beating them on the stones.

At this place we took one of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's boats, with comfortable cabins and good food, and steamed slowly up the river. On board were General Denning and Colonel Long, and the General recounted his experiences of twenty years before, as we went up past the places where he had then been fighting.

At Shwegoogyee, a small town where we landed in the afternoon, he showed us the house in which his wife and children had been besieged. Eight hundred Chins and Kachins, people of the hill tribes, had attacked him with but fifty-four Sikhs under his command. He had fortunately had a few hours' warning from a Burman, and with his handful of Sikhs he drove back the attacking forces. The Welsh Fusiliers came up afterwards, but the victory had already been won. The enemy were worse armed than our men, but outnumbered us by sixteen to one, and victory must at first have seemed impossible. The General's wife was



KATHAN ON THE IRRAWADDY
Where Pagodas cover the hill-side like white blossoms
(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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worthy of him, for when the enemy gathered round the house, the Indian cook in terror dropped the porridge plate, upon which Mrs. Denning called out to him not to indulge in nerves as the children must have their breakfast just as usual, and by her matter-of-fact manner restored confidence in her household. Verily hers was a fine Britomartian spirit!

The little town is beautiful now, with grassy streets and well-built Burmese wooden houses. Palms and other trees grow freely, and everywhere are shrines, big and small, with marble Buddhas, sleepy-eyed, calm and beneficent, brooding in green groves where once blood bedewed the grass. There is something very arresting in these Buddhas, so quiet and oriental and eternal, seeming to illustrate a great natural law, a necessity that neither life nor death can evade—the unavoidable effects of certain given causes, the inevitable harvest of sowing, the law of the soul's re-birth in various forms of matter; that iron law of progression through evolution, unchangeable by any intervention from heaven or from earth. The Crucified Christ that marks the hills and woods of Catholic countries is a Figure of such stirring pain and woe, such a tragically human and appealing symbol, that it calls up feelings and emotions that stir the heart and make the spirit pant, but the white and golden Buddhas deaden all these, and act like an opiate on the mind and the senses.

Leaving Shwegoogyee, we came on some wild geese settled on the water at some three hundred

yards distance, and one of these the General skilfully shot with his rifle, after which the boat stopped and sent off for it, and we had it for dinner that night.

The scenery along the river was pleasing all the way, and at the Defiles, through which we passed as the moon was rising, it was magnificent. On either side impressive rocky heights rise from the water, tree-covered and steep, and from out the jungle comes the primal speech of monkeys in the trees, a sort of echo of man's first utterance thrown back from the immemorial trees—the lispings of the babyhood of our race, the Alpha and Beta of our language, strange sounds that take one back many thousand centuries and leave one dazed with the effort of peering into the night which preceded the dawning day of mankind.

CHAPTER VI

BHAMO

"Plus je vois l'homme, plus j'aime le chien."[1]

At dawn next day we reached Bhamo and went to the Circuit House, there being, of course, no hotel. This was situated in a long, treeless and dusty road, and was not prepossessing.

Having a letter to the Commissioner, we sought him out that he might tell us where and how to obtain orchids, and perhaps also with a secret hope that he would give us breakfast, as there was nothing to eat in the Circuit House, and we had left the steamer very early, and were hungry, hot, and tired.

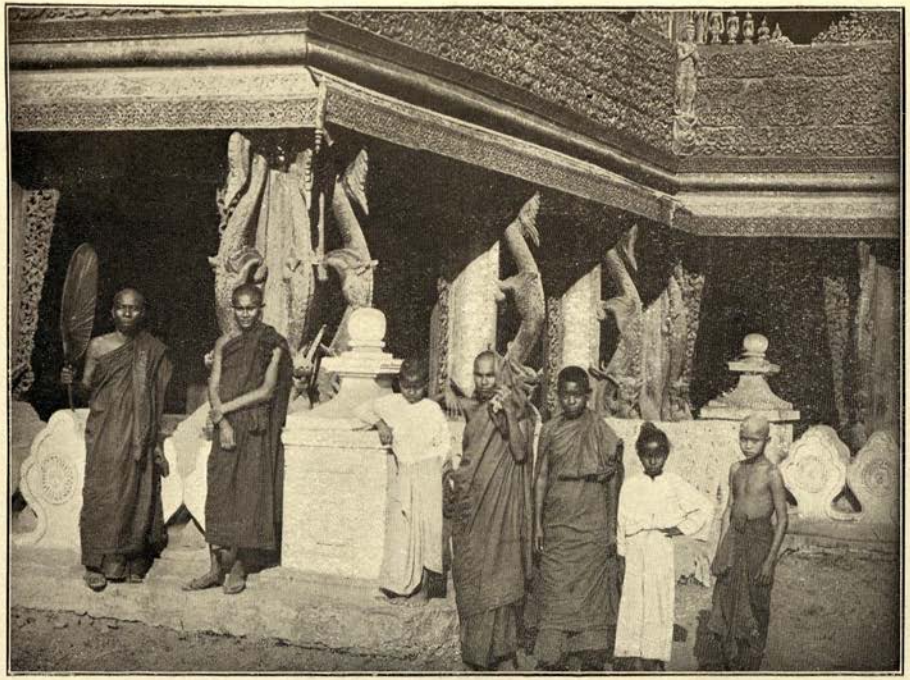
Mr. D——, however, does not set up for being a good Samaritan, and the extent of his hospitality and help was to *show* us a basket of rare strawberries, grown only in these cool, northern parts (think what they meant to us in the tropics), whilst he said sneeringly and exultantly, as he brandished them near our watering

[1] The intelligent reader will, I hope, understand that this remark does *not* refer to the *natives* mentioned in this chapter.

mouths, "These are worth all your orchids." We were given no chance, however, of judging of his veracity by tasting his fruit; as he did not offer us any of them, but instead took leave of us, saying that breakfast was awaiting him. Perhaps I ought not to grumble at this, as we afterwards heard that a residence of several years in Bhamo was the usual preliminary to the receiving of any hospitality in edible form from this gentleman.

Sadly we walked away, and turned out steps to the one and only shop in the town, which was managed by a German merchant, and where stationery, dusty books, tinned meats, and some orchids formed part of the varied assortment he displayed. After looking at his orchids, we turned our hungry attention to his potted wares, and had just bought a most indigestible breakfast, when a tall Englishman came in. Unblushingly, we asked him where we could get fresh food—tea, bread, anything—and, with a quick understanding of our condition, he hurried us into his trap and drove us off to his house. To Major Orman we owed much; he helped us in many ways, and was besides a most charming and most interesting man. He was also head of the military police for a great distance round, and thereby knew Burma well.

Bhamo being only fifteen miles from the frontier of China, pack mules and Chinese drivers pass in long strings through the town each morning, bring-



MONKS AND YOUNG BURMANS OUTSIDE A MONASTERY

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ing in goods for the large Chinese community there. A few Chins live in the town and trade. They are people of a small tribe who used to be very cruelly treated by the Burmese; even now their women are entirely disfigured by being tattooed on their faces—which they themselves own makes them appear to be very ugly—this mutilation being suffered in order to avoid violation from the Burmese, though the Chins near British territory are discontinuing the practice, which speaks tragically of a troublous past in the history of the tribe.

Sometimes the wilder Kachins come into the town, with their curious stockless guns, which they themselves make; but they, unlike the Chins, are not commercial, and usually remain in the hills and jungles, looking after their pigs, and occasionally breaking out into open vengeance against the Burmese, who retaliate with torture and death.

Driven in a tandem by Captain Wood, a pleasant young officer serving under Major Orman, we visited the oldest Chinese joss-house out of China. It is divided into courts, with altars to various gods and holy men, before which joss-sticks burn. We saw rich Chinese women painfully entering the temple to pray, sometimes supported and sometimes alone, their faces lined with the discomfort of walking on their aching, pinched-up feet. Their poorer sisters trotted in briskly, with unbound feet in sandals, these women's faces looking younger

and happier in consequence of their immunity from the tortures of custom.

In one of the courts into which the joss-house is divided stands a superb bronze vessel for the incense; in another giant figures of gods and saints receive adulation; but the most impressive is where ten gods, with wise and life-like faces, sit in a line on either side leading to a golden Buddha, the calmest and wisest of all.

Outside, in the open court, a tree bears in its branches, as though it were a floral offering to the gods, a splendid dendrobium, which the profane old Chinese guide offered to get down for us; but we resisted the temptation and left the flower to its tree and to its gods.

The next day we were driven by Captain Wood, in a four-in-hand of Burmese ponies, to Momoak, some ten miles distant from Bhamo, and here we stopped at the Circuit House for the night. A more dangerous means of locomotion I seldom beheld; an 80 h.p. motor was nothing to this "death trap" as driven by young Wood. The ponies, fortunately, were fairly intelligent beasts, and avoided some of the dangers into which he guided them.

The Circuit House overlooks a green, rice-bearing valley, wherein is flowing water. A village of native huts, built on stakes and thatched, has a background of jungle-covered hills, where are said to be rhinoceros and *selang*, a species of wild buffalo with rather an indifferent head, which,

however, is one of the chief game beasts of Burma. Dendrobiums and cymbediums were growing in the jungle near us, but none of them were in flower.

As the darkness closed in on us, I wandered out into the road, and listened to the bells of the little pagoda ringing, the breath of the night air having set them into musical motion. Suddenly Edward, the Welshman whom my husband had taken out with us as factotum, came up breathlessly to me, and, almost seizing my arm in his anxiety, asked excitedly, "What is that light near us?" Thinking he meant a taper burning in a hut at no great distance, I told him what I conceived it to be, but he pointed nervously forward and whispered, "No, ma'am; that light crossing the road." Expecting from his manner to see a new planet swim into my ken, or at least a will-o'-the-wisp or a goblin breathing flames, I looked and saw a firefly passing us. I told him what it was, but on the following day, when he saw his first elephant (excepting, at least, those in the Zoological Gardens), his surprise and interest were much fainter than when he had made acquaintance with his first firefly.

Edward, be it said in passing, was a Celt who, when first he arrived in the East, would give the front seat of a carriage to a native, whilst he himself would sit with his back to the horses, after duly making his excuses to the equine pair—so meek and polite he was. He soon, however, realized the

majesty that goes with a white skin, and by the time we reached the convict islands, some weeks later, he could cope with and master any native, even one convicted of murder, though he was careful not to anger these latter individuals. His white skin he kept untouched by sun or spray, a fact to which I shall often refer, it being indeed one of the miracles of the age. He bore the heat as well as we did, and we never regretted having brought him with us.

After cooking our own dinner, we slept that night on the only available bed, which was not provided with sheets or pillows, and which was so narrow that we had to lie each heading a different way, one with feet at the orthodox bottom end of the bed, the other had those members stretched towards its head; but we slept well, notwithstanding this unusual arrangement.

A few days later we went down the Irrawaddy, and afterwards journeyed in a terribly jolting train that positively leaped on the rails. Two nights of this continual motion were fairly trying, combined as it was with great heat and dust. However, we at last reached Rangoon, and amused ourselves with shopping at the store of an old Hindu, whom my husband had known when in Rangoon on a former visit. "Barabbas," as I addressed him, gave himself away completely every time he thought he was getting the best of a bargain, for then a mixture of avarice and triumph made his left eye tremble and twitch with excitement. We shopped with him in

an original and sporting way, tossing against him to decide the price of a large silver cup which I coveted. We won the toss—the Explorer, needless to say, had thrown—and, in consequence of this, had £4 deducted from the purchase.

The Andamans

"And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying, 'Here is a story book
Thy Father has written for thee.'

"'Come, wander with me,' she said,
'Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God.'"—LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER VII

TOWARDS THE ISLES OF SIN

"Dull weeds that rot by Lethe's wharf."

On the 15th March we took the Asiatic Steamship, *Maharajah*, and started for the Andaman Convict Islands, which lie three hundred and fifty knots west of Rangoon. Hither are sent the worst criminals of India and Burma: men and women with life sentences are exiled there, most of them being persons who have merited capital punishment, but who have, for some reason or in consideration of some extenuating circumstance, been exempt from the extreme rigour of the law. Since Lord Mayo was assassinated there during a visit of inspection, no Viceroy has been allowed to go to these isles of sin.

The steamer was small, probably under 1000 tons, but really comfortable, though most of our fellow-passengers were convicts en route for a long term of imprisonment. Twice a day, under a guard of Sikhs, the melancholy little crowd were marshalled on deck and given food, consisting mainly of rice. In the interval between meals the convicts were also occasionally taken up for air, being at other times kept below in two large cells. They all wore leg-irons, and the sound of these clanking up the

companion way will always haunt me with its dreary rhythm of captivity.

Our first sight of land was on the 16th, when we passed near Knochendam, a bare volcanic isle rising out of the sea. It is the habitation of wild goats, and the occasional refuge of adventurous convicts, who attempt to escape on rafts. Such have been found by passing steamers and taken back to their penal servitude.

Next morning early we landed the convicts at the main Andaman isle, the chief port of which is called Aberdeen. On the hilly land above the sea lies the great Cellular Jail, with its seven divisions like seven great claws, stretched in uneven lengths, which work in with the configuration of the land.

We continued our journey in the mail steamer for a short way up the river, and here the ship anchored that she might be loaded with copra, the kernel of the cocoanut broken into small pieces and dried in the sun; a great deal of cocoanut oil, about twenty-five gallons from each five hundred pounds' weight of copra, is obtained.



VOLCANO ON BARREN ISLAND KNOCKENHAM
Height 1,000 feet above sea-level, distant about 75 miles from Port Blair

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CHAPTER VIII

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"For what are we better than sheep or goats?"

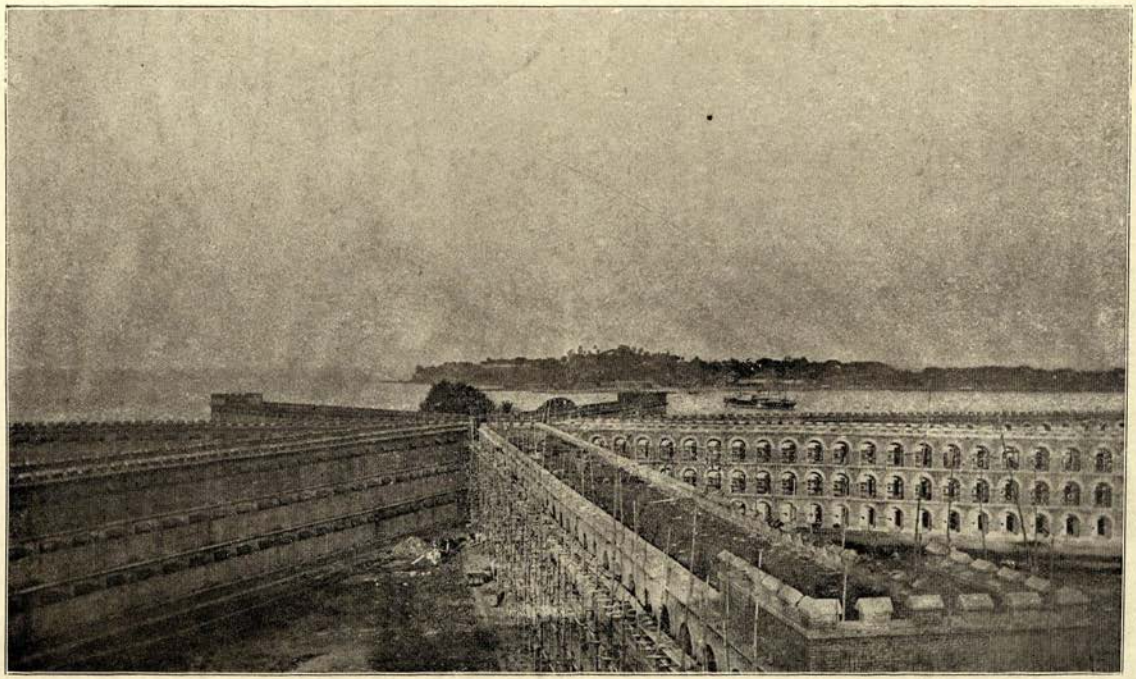
AFTER our ship had anchored far up beyond the main island, a launch came to fetch us back to Port Blair, the capital of the small isle called Ross, which faces the main island, and in which is centred the governing power of the group. On Ross, the circumference of which is only five miles, lives the Chief Commissioner, and here the stores are kept; so that, in the case of insurrection in the main island, where is the large central gaol with the worst of the convicts, the insubordinates would be quickly starved into submission. The post office is also in Ross, and the English Church, standing picturesquely at the summit of the island, which rises out of the sea, a green height girt with cocoanut palms.

Without His Excellency Lord Minto's kind letter to the Chief Commissioner, we could never have gone to the Andamans, as there is of course no hotel or any other place of public resort; and we were indebted entirely to the courtesy of the Chief Commissioner for the use of the Rest House. No one is allowed to stay in the Andaman Isles without taking out a licence and paying a tax. A man

whom we knew later had to do this for his mother-in-law, as though she were a female hound.

The run in the steam launch from the steamer back to Port Blair was a revelation of beauty, as we rapidly passed the many islands set in a turquoise sea and fringed with tall cocoanut palms. As we neared Port Blair a wonderful sight greeted us. Myriads of silvery, shining, darting sardines swam about in the green translucent water under the piles, the pebbles below them looking like great aquamarines—a vision which would have inspired an artist, especially perhaps a Japanese artist, to a delicate portrayal of the wonder in blue and green and silver.

On the pier a rickshaw with five men in red coats and coloured turbans, sent from the Chief Commissioner to take us up to the Rest House, added a touch of brilliant colour to the already dazzling picture that the island presented. Imagine it, with its smooth, red paths, kept like the walks in a well-cared-for park; with its banks of green dividing one from another—for, the island being a hill, each road lies cut out above the other—with its flaming gold mohur trees, bejewelled with their emerald-green foliage and masses of red and gold blossoms, and elsewhere the bare plumosa tree with its waxy-white, yellow-hearted flowers, as sweetly scented as jasmine, magnolia, or tuberoses. Tennis courts we passed also and cosy red-roofed bungalows, giving the whole an air of comfort and of home, which the little grey church at the summit completed.



THE CELLULAR JAIL IN 1900, DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION

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Carts go up and down the roads, drawn by magnificent white oxen, hump-backed and horned, and with large soft eyes and fragrant breath. These waggons stop suddenly as one passes, whilst the natives leading the oxen salaam meekly, and then all at once one remembers that this is a convict isle. That Hindu there, hurrying uphill with a kerosene tin full of water hung on either end of a pole, which he supports on one shoulder—he is a murderer; that Burman weeding by the wayside is one also, spared for some reason from the extreme punishment of death. So with everyone one sees: the servants in one's house, the boatmen, the fishermen, the road-menders—all are murderers or else incorrigible thieves. The latter wear a small red bar on their breasts, which brands them as thieves and keeps them ever in the lowest labours; for though one admits a murderer into one's house, no one will admit a thief: one can only be murdered once, but robbed many times.

Though the convicts are treated with all kindness, delivered from starvation or anxiety, cared for in sickness and kept in health, yet I believe men would rather die in freedom than live in captivity. At first one only recognizes this state of penal servitude as a curious fact; later on it preys on one's mind, haunts one's vision, seizes one's imagination—and then the island, in spite of its beauty, captivates one no more; the branching cocoanut palms then wave and dance robbed of their magic, and the scent of the plumosa is no longer sweet.

During the first day we had some difficulty in procuring food, for the Government runs the provision stores entirely and under military supervision. The butter is measured out in the scales of justice, and one's purchases bound up with official red tape. This is quite essential and right in every way, although it seems curious at first. We had, for instance, to order our meat twenty-four hours beforehand and to tie ourselves down to so many pounds of beef or mutton, and so many pounds we got. Whether it is supplied in a fillet or in hoofs and tail depends on which it is one's turn to have, and largely also on whether one is a subordinate or not. The subordinates are the goats in our flock; they, like goats, can eat anything. They are mostly Eurasians, therefore black-faced goats; they play tennis in their own court, they have their own club, they do the less important work, are clerks and storekeepers and the like; there is a great gulf fixed between them and us. I do not know if they are admitted to the Church services; I suppose they are; but I know that, when two enterprising ladies were wishful to procure the services of a nurse to reside permanently on the Island, instead of her being obliged, as is now the case, to come from India or Burma when she is required—it was suggested that the goats should contribute a fixed sum to her maintenance, whilst the sheep should pay only when ill, and then rather a larger sum; but, if a goat and sheep fell ill at the same time, though a sheep might be trusted not to do anything so

infra dig., the sheep should have the nurse's care, even had the goat summoned her first. The goats would not consent to this proposal, which is doubly charming when one knows that the principal lady who suggested the plan was not in reality a sheep at all, but was indeed the spiritual shepherdess of the flock. I suppose she thought that all the texts and injunctions from Holy Writ obviously refer only to the fleecy ones and not to the horned and hairy portion of the flock.

Be it remarked that the subordinates had the worst gramophone it was ever my fate to hear—truly a horn of abundance, pouring continually from this cornucopia laughing songs and marches and love lays, till I wished I were deaf and oblivious to them.

But *revenons à nos moutons*, or rather to the succeeding idea, the food question. The fare was extraordinarily cheap, all meat and preserves and vegetables being sold at cost price. We, that is my husband and myself and Edward and our cook, lived entirely on half a crown a day, which included tinned fruit and such-like delicacies—in fact, all that we ate and drank.

We had brought a cook with us on the Chief Commissioner's advice: perhaps murderers do not make good chefs. Anyway, we had our own, and he a Christian Hindu, Lazarus by name. I always considered his nomenclature badly chosen by the missionaries, for the two Lazaruses of the Bible rise up in one's mind, of one of whom it was said, "He stinketh," and of the other that he was covered

with sores and licked by dogs, and a beggar into the bargain. However, our Lazarus was a good cook and a nice fellow, speaking English and working hard.

The Rest House was built over a provision store, towards the top of the hill in, unfortunately, a very hot and airless spot; in fact, the temperature in it was often over one hundred and seldom under ninety degrees. It had a grass slope in front of it, on which a convict grazed his animals whilst he reposed in an arm-chair and watched them. During their not infrequent hours of rest a number of convicts also sat under the shelter of the wooden living rooms, which were raised on stakes.

If, when passing, we looked fixedly at their fare, and other natives were by to note them, they would throw away the food as being polluted—rather humiliating to us, it must be owned, for the meanest criminal so to act, but rendered less so by the knowledge that they fared sumptuously every day, and probably could spare a little rice, not of their own buying, for the sake of clinging to what shreds of caste they might still wrap round their nakedness.

In a notebook, written and illustrated by the great Verestchagin, I was amused to see that, whilst he was travelling in the East, he soundly thrashed a native servant for eating his simple fare out of the reach of the unbeliever's eye, a "gross impertinence" in the opinion of the Russian painter. I certainly think that no other nation on earth would tolerate the many prejudices of the Indians

as we do, or would act with such tact and kindness to them in all that concerns their caste and religious observances; certainly the Indians themselves are far less tolerant to each others' peculiarities than are we, who impartially respect the prejudices of all the manifold peoples under us.

My admiration for my countrymen increases greatly by seeing them in the East. Often they lose much that is of interest by their ignorance of the mode of thought, of the art, of the history, the botany, or the other resources of the lands they are in; but the way in which they bear the fevers and agues that attack them, the manifold discomforts of the Tropics, the slowness and the everlasting delays of the East—this is really praiseworthy. The untruths and the half-truths also are so annoying, though so easily accounted for when one remembers that the weak and the subordinate and the ignorant must always use subterfuge. People born of generations who have lived under blazing suns must necessarily be slow and listless and unbusinesslike, and our often aimless hurry and ambition and irritation cannot but seem absurd and undignified to the natives, though to the feverish man of the West their lack of the realization of time is almost maddening.

When I observed how usually just and beyond bribe or present or persuasion these countrymen of ours are, how a young man going East and being put in authority will take up his new power as to the manner born, as though each one were naturally a ruler, then I felt that we have reason

for pride in our flag and nationality. The women, too, are wonderful: parted from friends and children, and usually from all that interests them, they yet live for years more or less cheerfully in fiercely hot climates, where heat, damp, insects, and moths make it impossible for a woman to have her household gods and pretty odds and ends around her without their becoming damaged. She is wonderful, through her very limitations; for usually she is not in the least interested in the country or the natives, or even in her husband's work; and yet she manages to bear the exile from the land of her desires in a way in which I am almost certain no foreigner could, unless indeed she gave up feeling that in Europe was her home, and planted herself finally in the East, bringing up her children there, and seldom or never going back, as the Dutch so generally do in their colonies.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRISON SYSTEM

"Men shall wear
On their heads the dust
As ensign."—HAFIZ.

FIFTY-ONE years ago last January the Andaman Islands were transformed from being merely the dwelling places of what is said to be the remains of the oldest Negrito race on earth into a settlement of criminals from India and Burma. Already, in 1789, Archibald Blair, under the then Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis, had formed a settlement, partly composed of free men and partly of convicts, to put a stop to the murdering of shipwrecked crews, which at that time made the Andamans notoriously dangerous. A series of mistakes—not Blair's — caused the renunciation of this plan, and the settlers were taken away from the sickness and damp to which they had been exposed, due to the wrong site in the island having been, for strategical reasons, chosen for the settlement.

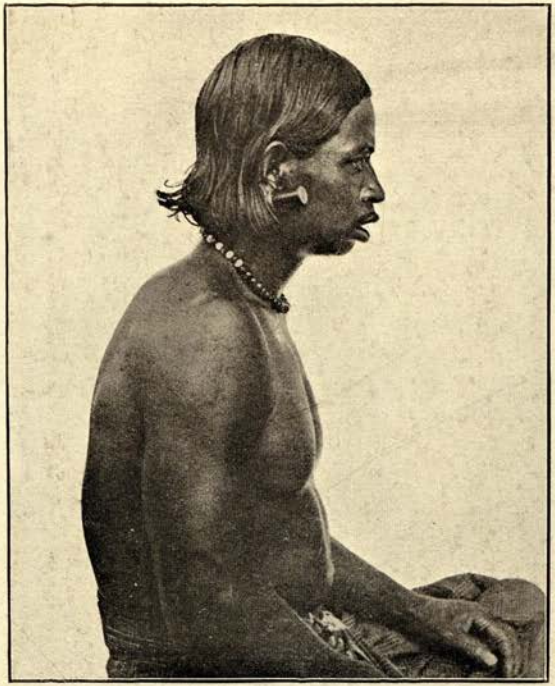
Picture conditions as they were in 1858. Captain H. Mann, sent down to re-annex the Islands, was

first faced with densely-wooded isles, with no roads, no paths even, but everywhere thick jungle vegetation, unhealthy in many parts, and dangerous on account of the wild tribes of Andamanese, of whom the Jaruas were the most implacable, and remain inimical and treacherous to this day. The islands have never been the habitat of any dangerous wild animals, but the waters abound with sharks and monstrous fishes.

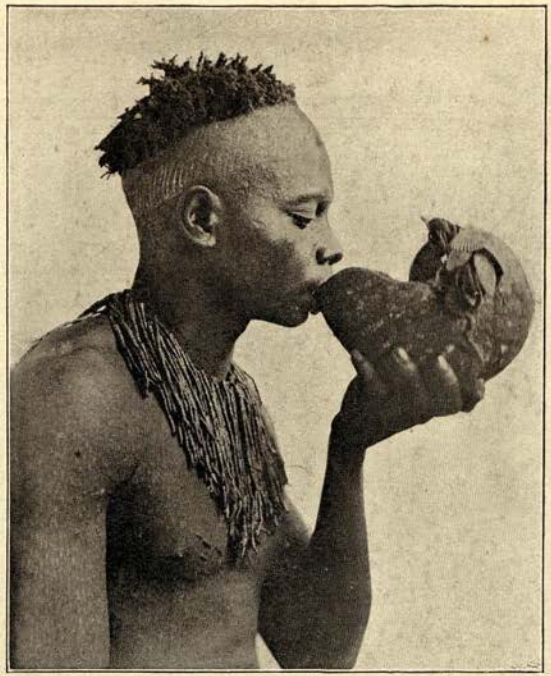
Mann and three others of the Commission fortunately decided on Ross as head-quarters, and named the port after Blair. This island is now the official head-quarters of the settlement, and faces the main island with Port Aberdeen and the large central jail.

A few months after Mann's arrival, Dr. Waller, a jail superintendent, joined him, and began, aided only by four European officials, to clear the islands of Ross and Chatham—a Herculean task when it is remembered that the annual rainfall is between 120 and 140 inches, and that he had to master 732 convicts, working under him at the clearings, with no means of preventing their mutinying or escaping, which latter course they perpetually adopted. He was harassed also by attacks from the Andamanese, and only supported by a miserable corps of Sebandis, that is, an irregular troop formed in India, the individuals of which were probably riff-raff picked up in the bazaars of Behar and Oudh.

One cannot but marvel at his success, during



NATIVE OF NANCOWRIE
His lips distended with betel-chewing



AN ANDAMANESE
Drinking from a Nautilus
(Photo by Maurice Portman)

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the fifteen months of his control; and though his measures were harsh, they were so of necessity, and his pluck and energy must have been prodigious to have enabled him to cope with such difficulties and dangers.

Gradually roads were made and clearings cut; strong men with milder methods succeeded him, and the Andamanese, all except the Jaruas, learned to trust the white man and to cease attacking him. This was due largely to the founding of an Andamanese "home," so called, which is in existence to-day. Any aborigine may stay there till he wishes to leave, and whilst in the home he is fed and doctored, and in exchange does a little fishing and planting for the settlement.

When punitive raids were made on the Andamanese, their children were taken and brought up in this home, a careful record being kept of their parents and of the tribe to which they belonged, for the Andamanese are divided into twelve main tribes. Once having grown up, they were allowed to return, and it was hoped that their good reports of British kindness would inspire confidence in the aborigines. One wonders, though, how these young savages found it possible to lead the roving jungle life after losing their keenness of jungle lore and observation through living under more or less artificial conditions.

We visited the home a few days after our arrival. It is at present situated on the main island near Dundas Point, and consists of a few huts which

are kept clean, rather contrary to instincts of the inmates; and here the women stay, whilst the men go into the jungle to spear pig or to get turtle in exchange for their food. They are intensely black people, with black lips and eyes, and curly hair, like a lamb's; small, lithe, and well-made, clothed with a red band. The women are circular, smiling, ugly folk, with belts of seaweed and leaves. They seemed shy at being photographed, evidently thinking that the white man would, with his superior morals and religion, see evil where to them no evil was.

I never, personally, felt more ashamed of my civilization than when I noticed this; I sometimes think that immorality is the very antithesis of nudity, and that the people most clothed are the people least pure, for certainly the less moral is a people, the more clothed it needs to be. It was the lasciviousness of the Arab conquerors that caused the defeated Hindus to conceal their women, as the Arab women themselves are concealed—till the whole country is corrupted, and even the face of woman has to be covered lest it excite evil thoughts. The Hindus imagine the white woman to be brazen because she goes unveiled, and I have frequently felt embarrassed at my Indian servants seeing me in evening dress. We are shocked at the unclothed savage, and they, in turn, knowing our views, flinch from our eyes.

In a little semi-shop, semi-museum, the Andamanese had ancestral skulls for sale — not relics

of the head-hunters' skill, but the skulls of the dead, disinterred through affection, that they might be worn as a charm. Bows and arrows also were there, and crude ornaments of shells and berries.

Gradually, through fifty years, the convict settlement has grown thus. Some of the officials have been murdered, and others have had their lives attempted, but now of 473 square miles 327 are more or less occupied or worked upon. There is now a Department, run by Forest Officers, who regulate convict labour in the various islands, in which trees, some of which go to pave the streets of London, are felled and transported to the workshops. There are harbours and inlets, where formerly pirates used to careen their vessels; there are fields where cattle graze, and villages where ex-convicts and ticket-of-leave men live; besides some cocoanut and coffee plantations, owned by free peasants, generally descendants of the convicts, and worked by convict labourers hired from the Government. There are hospitals, workshops, and prisons, a lunatic asylum, a lepers' home, and a women's jail.

This enormous administration—comprising also convicts in domestic service, as well as fishermen, road-menders, and the like—besides the commissariat which is managed at Port Blair, is all regulated by a Chief Commissioner and a staff of nine organizing officers, under whom are twelve English overseers. The whole disciplinary charge

of the settlement is in the hands of these men, who are supported by two companies of Indian troops and two companies of an English regiment. The warders in the jails are all convicts, who through good behaviour have been promoted to this rank. They naturally wish to keep their power, and so do not very often abet the prisoners in attempts at escaping; neither, on the other hand, dare they be too harsh with the convicts under them, as, were any warder to provoke their anger by cruelty, some desperado would be certain to kill him.

There are, as well, officers and subordinates of different departments, including Public Works, Commissariat, Forest Administration, the management of the Marine Service, and so on. It is almost, I suppose, the most striking organization of the day, excepting only that of a beehive and General Booth's Army—widely different as are both of these from this and from each other.

To illustrate the life of a convict, I will choose one, a Burmese, whom we knew, and draw his story as best I may as an example of the others. Our murderer shall be My Myi, with whom we became great friends, as is related farther on.

Fifteen years ago he sat clothed in silk in his home in Rangoon, and smoked his cheroot as he awaited the return of his younger brother from the Shway Dagon, whither he had gone in company with most of the rest of the town; for it was the annual festival, in March, when pilgrims from the

Isles and from the highlands of Burma, from Siam and from China come to pray at this, the only sacred place containing true relics of the Guatama Buddha, which stands on the highest summit of the Pegu range, over which the pagoda has towered for more than five hundred years.[1] The gold and silver and jewelled bells jingled in the evening breeze, and joy and devotion had brought together thousands of the lovers of Buddha to pray and feast and make merry in the light of the great full moon. Suddenly the appearance of his brother broke on the reverie of My Myi—his beloved brother, flushed and angry, who with trembling voice told him how a rough Sikh soldier-policeman had officiously reprimanded him for some triviality at the "Powe," and when his interference elicited an obvious retort, he had hit the brother of My Myi and told him to be off.

The Burmans are so easy-going and suave and polite when not roused that the roughness and disdain of the Sikhs offend them to the very quick, and they can neither tolerate nor understand the aloofness and pride of this so very different people. My Myi hated them, hated their very presence in the town, their ideas of caste, their refusal to touch food not of their own making, their conviction of their uniqueness in possessing the one and only true creed; hated their tracts, called *A Word*

[1] The pagoda was erected to a Budh who preceded the Shin Guatama, and contains relics of three Budhs besides those of the great teacher.

to Unbelievers (how delightfully, by the way, is this title reminiscent of a Christian's tract!), their contempt for those even of their own nation who are not of the chosen people—that is, those who do not receive the Garunt, their Holy Book.

My Myi sprang up at the words of the "Benjamin" of his family, and ran out to where he knew his brother had been. Alas! the policeman was still there, looking out for fresh mirth to check. My Myi stopped in front of him. "What did you hit my brother for?" he shouted. "He is only a boy: if he was noisy, a mere word kindly spoken by you would have checked him. How did you dare to hit him for so little?" "I struck him, and I will strike you," shouted the Sikh, raising a hand; and My Myi "saw red." The hot blood of him fairly took fire, the independence of his race, so lately subdued, all rose up protesting, and, as an Englishman would ejaculate, "Damn you!" or fling out a fist at the other man, so instinctively My Myi's hand sought his side, seized his *dah* —the perpetual companion of the Burman, the weapon wherewith he chops his way through the jungle and with which he cuts his food—and in a moment the Sikh's soul was freed from his body, and My Myi was a murderer who had forfeited his right to live. After that came the dreary trial and the heavy sentence of penal servitude for life, which, with good conduct, might mean release after twenty-five years.

So My Myi had his hair cut short, his long,

black hair which he had cared for as women do; and his silk *sari* was replaced by a coarse hemp one with broad arrows on it. Then, with chains on his feet and with handcuffs, he was put on board with other murderers and habitual thieves, and was borne away from all he cared for on earth. On the steamer he was put in a big barred room, and two or three times a day would be marshalled up on deck and have a portion of rice and a glimpse of the sun. Three days passed thus, and then they reached Port Aberdeen with the big Cellular Gaol, which, like an immense red septoput with huge tentacles, spreads over the summit of the hill. Round his neck, on a metal circle, was hung a small wooden pendant with hieroglyphics, giving his number, date of incarceration, and length of sentence, and this alone proved him an individual different from the rest; in all else—in clothing, food, and every other detail—he was but one of a thousand or so, with no individuality, no friends, no one, perhaps, who even knew his name.

My Myi being under life sentence, as are most of those who are sent to the Andamans, had first to go through six months of severe discipline, and silent, though not particularly hard work, in the Cellular Jail. No woman, on account of the dangerous character of the convicts there, is taken over this prison, with its great iron gates forged by homicidal hands, to lock and bar the exit of the murderers.

After this, the most severe part of the sentence,

was completed, My Myi, like the other prisoners, was put to hard outdoor labour. He toiled with a gang at road-laying or digging or building; and every night he and his brethren in Cain were marshalled back to the barracks nearest their work and locked up until the morning. For four and a half years this was his daily life. During that time he received no pay or reward: but he was being studied carefully that work suitable to his capacities might afterwards be given him.

During the following cycle of five years, he laboured in easier and pleasanter ways, and received a small wage in return. He was also promoted to the position of petty officer, which he was filling when we met him towards the end of his first ten years. When that period is completed he will become a "self-supporter," receiving a ticket-of-leave, which will enable him to settle down in some village to earn his own living.

At this stage he may send for his family, if he is married, or else marry a female convict. He will still be under supervision and obliged to work. He will be assisted in various ways, and then, after a few years, he will be obliged to support himself and pay taxes. Henceforward he will be treated as a free man, and after twenty or twenty-five years will be allowed to return to Burma, should he wish to do so, which is unlikely.

No prisoner under eighteen or over forty years of age is supposed to be sent to the Andaman Settlement.

The whole system of convict treatment here is humane, free, and even lenient when compared with prison management at home, and the men have always before them the prospect of qualifying by good conduct for domestic service, or of rising to be warders and petty officers, whilst our prisoners in England have not enough work to pass the long hours, and nothing whereon to feed their ambition, beyond a slight shortening of their sentence if their conduct is good. But, in spite of its humanity, how irksome and galling convict life, especially at first must be, particularly to the independent, freedom-loving Burman. How long a suffering he has brought upon himself for that one minute's loss of control, during which he forgot the first of the five precepts of his faith, which commands him "not to take any life at all"—a rule he will probably keep rigorously henceforth, not even destroying the mosquito that bites him, murderer of man though he be.

In addition to the long years of penal servitude, the convict has to leave home and country and family, and, in the case of a Hindu, lose caste, more precious to him than all the rest. To the natives of Northern India, to the hillsmen and others of the border tribes, it must seem so absurd to be punished for taking a life when, in their view, not to take it would be the dishonourable and impossible course, when to them life is nothing, and they would lose their own or take another's without a moment's hesitation. A colonel of a Sikh regi-

ment told me of a Pathan under his command who asked him for leave. "What do you want it for so suddenly?" asked the Englishman. "To kill an enemy over the border," answered the orderly. "Right; you can go," said his chief, "but you must be back in a month's time." Punctually to the day the soldier returned, saluted his officer, and said, "It is done," and neither master nor man ever referred to the subject again.

Of course, I suppose, order must be kept and laws made, and yet it seems so outrageous to ask of Pathans and hillsmen, who have the code of morals of the fifteenth century, suddenly to fall in with those of the twentieth century, and to imprison them if they do not do so. Some religious fanatics from India were shut up for ever in the Cellular Jail, because their code of morals necessitated their killing a white man at sight, merely thinking thus to assure themselves a place in Paradise. In self-defence we must segregate people with views so disastrous to ourselves; but it is often forgotten by those who judge them as being fiends incarnate that after all they do but resemble the Fathers of the Church of some centuries ago in their theory that the death of the unbeliever is a righteous act. Also, when it comes to the practice of killing him, the men under discussion certainly do this in a speedy and comparatively painless way, whilst the heads of the Church drew out the agony by torture and other ingenious means, presumably acting thus in

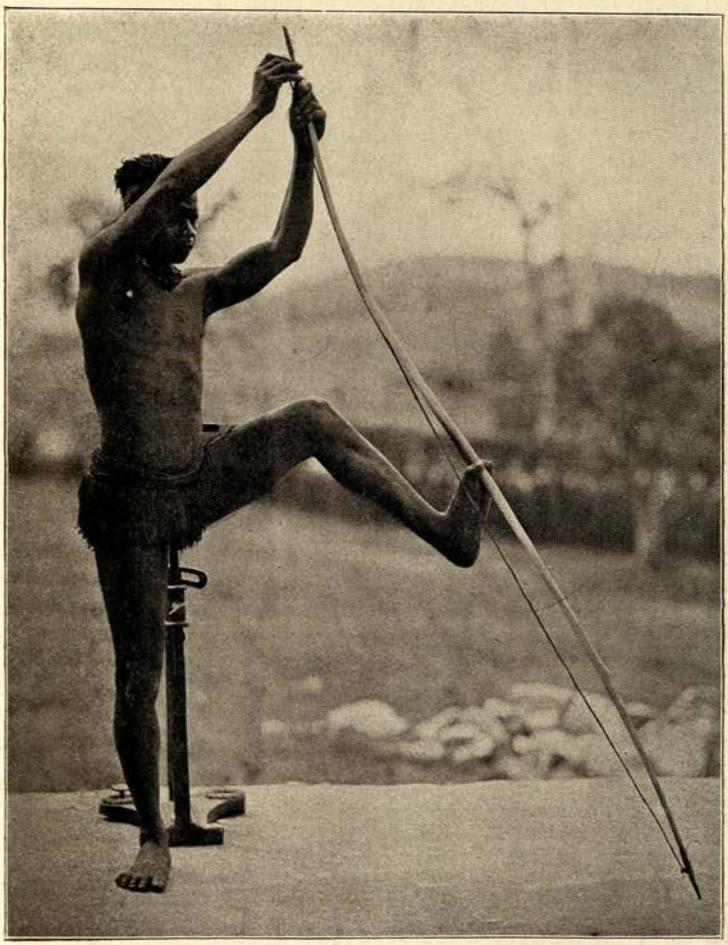
kindness that the sufferer might have the more time in which to reconcile himself to God and to death. With the Pathans, however, the motive differs slightly, as their idea in destroying the unbeliever is merely to obtain salvation for themselves. Looked at in a certain light, religious persecution becomes both merciful and logical, for to those who believe that only by a particular faith or creed can man win a joyful immortality, there is no way of stamping out damnation to the many save by the destruction of the few tainted with misguided ideas which will corrupt the masses if allowed to spread. Torture never was logical, but extermination was and *is* to those who really think that only one creed can admit its adherents to eternal bliss.

Amongst the convicts one of the favourite occupations is standing in water and stamping down sacking, which is afterwards dried and used for clothes. This work is given as one of the hardest labours, since it bruises and hurts the feet of the convicts, but they like this form of penal work, in spite of its discomfort, because afterwards they are given oil for the relief of their feet and, to the Easterner, oil is indeed the "oil of gladness," which is missed more than aught besides. Corporal punishment is very seldom administered in the Cellular Jail, but one old highway robber was flogged for having escaped three times. He was too sensible to try to leave the island or go into the jungle, where the Jaruas would have killed

him; he merely did it for an occupation, from a sporting instinct, and a love of overcoming seemingly impossible difficulties. The third time he got out by means of some string and a piece of glass, with which he cut the bars of the small aperture in his cell, through which food is passed in a case of solitary confinement. He escaped in this wonderful way, and then merely went and sat outside on the slope in the sun, laughing like a mischievous boy. The authorities could not allow him to go about freely, for so great was his courage and individuality that he would have become a leader of others, and who knows what daring plans he might not have carried into execution! However, Colonel Browning, the Chief Commissioner, was going to watch him and see if he could not promote him to some position of trust and of greater independence.

Colonel Browning is much loved by the prisoners for the great personal interest he takes in them, often supervising the weighing out of their food, and in other ways showing his attention to their welfare.

The convicts who have been disciplined by the appointed time of detention in the Cellular Jail are next allowed to go out of the actual building and work on Aberdeen or on Ross Island across the water, returning by night to their cells. It is a striking and pathetic sight at sunset to see the prisoners congregated on the quay previous to boarding the launch which is to take them



AN ADAMANESE
In the act of completing the making of his bow
Photo by Maurice Portman

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across, for many of them kneel down and, with heads bowed to the ground, say their evening orisons.

As far as I could discover, religious observances lapse during their time of detention as convicts. A Catholic priest visits his parishioners at Port Blair two or three times a year, and the chapel is a very pretty one. Presumably any Catholic converts in the Cellular Jail would also be visited then.

A convict in domestic service, who was "all the same as master," would, I think, go to master's Church; and once or twice a year a Burmese Buddhist priest is allowed to visit his people; otherwise, owing to the large diversity of faiths, no mosque, pagoda, or Hindu temple is allowed to be put up, even by the practically freed convicts, as each building would be likely to cause fights and dissensions—as indeed they do in India, where the Mohammedan and Hindu population so often break out into violent feuds against each other. One cannot help regretting the necessity of this regulation, when one considers how enormously the temple and the pagoda enter into the lives of their devotees. There being no feast or holiday which does not hinge on religion, no centre for their assemblies to compare with their temples, it cuts off from them a very large portion of their pleasures and customs and of their interest in life, and leaves them bereft in a way that few Europeans could understand, though Catholics, whose churches are

always open and always sought, will comprehend the daily void that the absence of shrine and symbol makes in the lives of these people who all seem to be naturally worshippers and devotees.

CHAPTER X

OUR DAILY LIFE

"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness,
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face.

. . . . . .

Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take,
And stab my spirit broad awake."

R. L. STEVENSON.

OUR bungalow consisted of a large bedroom, a dining-room, a room where Edward slept, a bath-room, and a big verandah. The baths were such as were formerly in use in India before the tin ones became customary—very large wooden tubs, with a wooden upright plug (on which one invariably knocks oneself), filled once or twice a day by the convicts with their kerosene tins. They are much more comfortable than the newer ones which are now more used in India.

After a night of sound sleep beneath mosquito curtains, bathed in perspiration (the temperature in our bungalow was over a hundred degrees, day and night, its only drawback being its sheltered position, which increased the inevitable heat), we

had our tea brought to us, and got up between seven and eight o'clock, and then went down to fish, for the fishing in the Andamans is a delight even to an unsporting person like myself. From 8.30 till 11 o'clock the Explorer would stand upright in the boat whilst a convict, a handsome, bearded Pathan, rowed slowly about, and I sat huddled in the bow.

The bait is a living sardine, of which our boatman has many in the inevitable kerosene tin at his side. The fish to be caught is the *kokari*, which weighs anything from three to fifteen pounds and has fine flakey flesh. The long, strong rods have wire attached to them instead of the customary gut. The old *kokari* is very knowing, and will not bite if the sardine is at all slow, so that one has to re-bait the line continually, and use a certain art in drawing him through the water, not too quickly or jerkily, but allowing the sardine his natural movements.

The fishing is really fascinating, because the water is so clear that one can see the *kokari* coming up, looking at the bait and then swimming away, or else taking it, which is a preface to a struggle more or less prolonged, for he plays for five, ten or even twenty minutes, and, thanks to the bad hooks procured in the Ross store, gets away quite three times out of five. He pulls with great strength, and "whirr" goes the reel; then comes the hurried winding up again, whilst the boat swings round, and our boatman, an enthusiast, gets

into a frenzy of excitement, and of rage if the fish is lost.

Another fish in the bay is the *gar:* he is shaped like an eel, and has saw-like teeth, with which he usually cuts the line. He dashes after the sardine at a great speed, like a fierce electric machine ; and either cuts the line and twists the hooks, or else gets caught at once, The bones of this fish are green, which gives people a disgust of it, but, though not nearly as good as the *kokari*, it is quite palatable.

When pursuing unbaited sardines, the *gar* rush along and take great jumps in the water, while the sardines leap away in absolute sprays of silver rippling over the sea. We watched all these events as clearly as in an aquarium, whilst in the sun the sapphire of the sea was infinitely beautiful.

On the pier-head, ladies and British soldiers fished, and sometimes an Andamanese came and waited there with his coil of string baited with cuttle-fish. The Mussulman, whose religion enacts that he shall kill every animal he has to destroy by cutting its throat in a certain prescribed way, which he could not possibly do in the case of fish, escapes the difficulty by saying that Allah has already cut their throats—which saying refers to their open gills. This embargo has sometimes serious consequences for big-game hunters. My husband, for instance, when he was in Africa, had forcibly to induce his Mussulman followers not to destroy the value of the heads he had procured by

cutting the throats of the beasts in a place which would have rendered it impossible to set them up afterwards.

The Burmese fishermen, whose religion holds out terrors for those depriving living things of their existence, exculpate themselves by saying that the fish, when taken from the water, die of suffocation through their own folly in not being satisfied with the good air.

Giants and monsters of the deep are sometimes caught—great *barakuta*, which weigh up to eighty pounds, and *surmi*, weighing over a hundred pounds. We went trolling once or twice, but without success; however, with his rod, my husband caught a small *barakuta*, which weighed only five pounds, and once also a young *surmi*. Another catch which we got with the line was the parrot fish, very coarse indeed to eat, but a most brilliantly coloured creature, gorgeous in the blues and pinks which have given it its name. The cuttle-fish was amongst the strangest of any that we saw. It seems, indeed, formed for literature, with its inky blood and its quill-shaped back-bone, a most curious combination.

A remarkable incident comforted us one evening when several *kokari* had broken off our line, and we were returning despondently to a fishless dinner —for there are no fish shops in the Andamans. I had suggested eating the bait fried, which had somewhat riled my companion, when, attracted by the beauty of the evening, we paused in a little

corner of the beach to look at the setting sun. A Nicobarese native, who had worked himself up to being an electrician on the Island—for Colonel Browning's house, and his alone, was lighted by electricity—was there also, watching the sea, when a large swarm of sardines, jumping and leaping, swam past at a few yards from the beach, a big *kokari* being in pursuit of them. Quick as a flash, he ran and fetched his fish spear from a wooden shed close by, and, running into the water, where he stood knee-deep, speared the fish as it swam by and gave it to us. His dexterity was amazing. I have seen fishermen in Peru spearing their prey, but they were always prepared beforehand and walking in the water on the look-out: here the captured *kokari* was in hasty pursuit of the sardines, so that great skill was needed to kill it in this way.

One other little incident in our fishing experiences comes to my memory. My husband was being rowed by the wall of sea front, manœuvring with a sardine, while five young *kokaris*, greenhorns evidently, and "just come to town," swam round the boat, diving under, and almost, it seemed, sniffing at the captive sardine, when suddenly a lovely little kingfisher, of which there are several in the island, darted down, skimming over the water, and made a peck at the unlucky sardine—a tribute to my husband's good management of the same, as proving that its movements appeared unhampered by the line. I came to the conclusion, watching these

shoals of sardines, that fishes must have a means of communication, and, as it is probably very elementary, and does not depend, of course, on thoughts to be expressed or sounds to be known, I think it may be by vibrations in the water made by the fish's tail or by its other movements. Very often a shoal spreading over several yards would turn in an instant, and swim for shelter under the pier, or elsewhere, the movement starting behind and invisible to the leaders, who must have received the warning by some such means as I suggest.

It seems to me on further reflection and reading that the undoubted transmission of messages amongst fish in shoals and birds in flocks is due to the working of the Group Soul—that mysterious intelligence which is regnant over the numerous small bodies through which it works. They are, perhaps, the broken and divided fractions through which one unseen mental force acts, many material manifestations of one immaterial power.

Leaving now the fascinating question of *pisces*, I will resume the narrative of our daily life.

There were several pleasant people we knew—Mrs. Anderson, a Christian Scientist, amongst them, and to her we owed many comforts in the way of flower vases and fruit and table-linen lent to us. She also helped me very much by coming down nearly every morning during our stay in the island and peremptorily ordering the convicts—who, as I have said, sought shelter from the sun beneath the



(From the Painting by F. Copnall, of Liverpool)

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elevated flooring of the shop over which was our bungalow—to clear away at least a minimum of the "matter out of place" for which they and their animals were responsible. Fortunately for me, she did not deny the existence of dirt, though she was ideally foolish enough to reject the reality of disease. Mrs. Anderson gave delightful dinners, after which we sat out-of-doors, and in the moonlight saw the great uninterrupted sweep of the sea on the east of the island, and the bay fringed with cocoanut palms—a wonderful panorama that refreshed and rested one after the saddening view from nearly all the other bungalows, which, as well as the roads, face west and look upon Port Aberdeen and the Cellular Jail—the eastern side of the island being a cliff, round which circles a path, and at the foot of which there is a charming beach.

The ladies of the island, debarred from shops, usually go out in the afternoon and play tennis or watch it played, and once a week listen to the strains of the convict band—a rather criminal institution, it must be owned, with a choice of tunes varying from "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" to "The Girl I left behind me." When practising, these two often followed one another; but the performers, being neither musical nor Christian, did not notice the incongruity of the effect.

Gardens, as we know them, are practically impossible in the Andamans, for there, as in all tropical places, Nature sees that flowers grown in the earth are but too liable to be beaten down in the

torrential rains and burnt in the fierce hours of heat; so nearly all the flowers grow on trees, in the branches of which the orchid amateur hangs cocoa-nuts filled with dendrobiums or vandas.

The trees at Port Blair were quite beautiful: in front of us flowered a *Plumosa* with leafless branches and large, waxy, white and yellow blossoms, which towards their time of falling were surrounded by leaves. The scent of them was wonderful, a sort of bewitching sweetness that is blended with all my memories of the island. The little Catholic chapel was bathed in it, and so equally was the plot of ground in front of our house.

The *Gold Mohur* (called after the Indian gold coin) is another magnificent tree, and the one that I first noticed on coming to the island, laden with green leaves and clumps of flowers, orange and red, the red predominating—flame-like blossoms, which add greatly to the beauty of the isle, and form a shining background to one's thoughts of it, like the golden background of a masterpiece by Botticelli, against which all the other remembrances stand out as painted figures.

Colonel Browning's charming house was hung with lovely creepers, and inside was some very fine wood-carving, done by Burmese convicts. The Club below possessed screens done in this way, which are the very best possible examples of Eastern carving.

English officers are garrisoned in the large barracks on the hill on the corner of the island—a

building called Windsor Castle, which edifice it is supposed to resemble.

Sometimes in Ross one would meet strange small women in trousers and spangles and crude colours, like puppets for a weird ballet or a pantomime, with rings in their ears and bracelets on their arms and feet, and little dressed-up babies on their hips. These are the wives of the Sikh guard. They much dislike being photographed, as they think it immodest to be seen of many strange men, though they are not as closely veiled as are most Hindu women. The Sikhs have undoubtedly some Greek blood in them, to which must be due their beautiful regularity of feature, found often in the men, but more rarely in the women.

On the trees, in the evening, flying foxes hang, and communicate with each other in squeaky sounds, to the annoyance, no doubt, of the little grey and black squirrels which also harbour there, Rama's friends, according to the legend, which tells of how one of these small animals helped him during his voluntary exile from his kingdom. The god stroked the squirrel and left as a token of his abiding friendship three long, black marks on the soft grey fur, showing where the caress had passed like a blessing upon him.

A very pleasing feature of the Hindus is the wonderful manner in which they tame their animals: their cows and goats are perfectly friendly and accustomed to living with them, and almost sharing their family life. As Hindus do not eat beef, they

can with a clear conscience befriend the large-eyed, hump-backed cows, whose calves often play with their own children.

On the East of the island the beach was full of interesting shells and hermit crabs, little beings clothed in the cast-off crustaceæ of other fishes. As they grow they change the shells they had first chosen for larger ones, adhering to their borrowed dwellings by means of their tails. It is amusing to see them, all garbed differently, running about over the sands and sometimes fighting desperately, for they are fierce, cannibalistic creatures towards each other.

I mentioned that the Chief Commissioner, Colonel Browning, was unable to ask us to stay with him, as he had kindly intended doing, because there were two cases of typhoid in his house—both afflicted ladies having caught the illness in Rangoon, though they did not know this until they reached the Andamans. One case, that of Mrs. White, the newly-married wife of Captain White, son of the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, ended fatally. The other patient was a friend of Mrs. Browning, a very charming girl of just seventeen. She had left school some few months before, and was coming out to the Andamans for a long stay when she met a certain Captain —— on board the steamer, and became engaged to him. It was arranged that he should join her later in the Andamans, so that they could get married there. After a stay of some weeks in Rangoon, Miss —— left for the Anda-

mans, and on arriving she almost immediately developed typhoid fever. Her fiancé came nevertheless, and both he and she were most anxious to be married, as his leave was short and no other arrangement could be made without a great deal of difficulty. As the bride could not possibly go to the church, the permission of the Bishop in Rangoon had to be obtained before the ceremony could be solemnized in the house. The Bishop objected, saying that a lady with a temperature as high as that which her clinical thermometer indicated was in no fit state to marry, and could hardly, in the circumstances, even be held responsible for her actions. But he reckoned without their youthful pluck and enthusiasm, that took no note of fever or of illness. I do not quite know how it was arranged, as all these things happened before we arrived, but the marriage did take place, and two days later the bridegroom was obliged to return to India, further leave being refused him. It must have been a terrible journey to Calcutta, for during several days he had no news of his wife, who was then at the most critical time of her illness, and as likely to die as to live. She got well, fortunately, but the hot time of the year which was then beginning made it inadvisable for her to join her husband in India. After her convalescence she thought that she had better return to school, where her sister was, and wait there for six months or so, as she would not have regained her strength in the Andamans. Her husband, however, absolutely refused to allow this,

and wished her to join some sisters or aunts of his in a hill station in India, where he could occasionally see her.

What ultimately happened I do not know, but the whole case seemed to me an exceedingly original one.

CHAPTER XI

TOPSY AND PHŒNIX BAY

"Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru."—POPE.

TOPSY was an Andamanese, who was caught young, clothed, Christianized, civilized, and who then thought that she could share all the privileges of her preceptors and models and be as immoral as she chose. This, of course, was not to be heard of, for we ask a higher morality from our Eastern subjects than we do from ourselves, cohabitation in India being a punishable offence (if practised by Hindus—not otherwise, of course). So Topsy was punished, and then given a husband, and finally turned into a nurse for white babies. She was eventually taken to England, and thence she wrote the following letter, which I have copied, as giving an opportunity of seeing into the narrow skull of an aborigine. It ran thus:—

"READING,
"*28th October*, 1907.

"My dear Miss,

"You will be surprised no doubt when you receive this, trust this will find self and at home quite well, so far I'm thankful to say I'm keeping

well. I used to get fever every day. I feel the cold dreadful, although I wear nothing but warm things, and most of the time spend by the kitchen fire to keep myself warm. The weather here is so changeable, sunshine one, pouring rain, the next, and the nights are simply awful.

"I shall be glad to get on the sea again. I ought to have left on the 16th. of this month, but as usual, money of course, anyhow I am leaving Mrs S. on the 9th. of November to go to the lady I am going out with, as far as Calcutta.

"I must tell you some account of my journey to England. After leaving Port Blair, had to stay five days in Rangoon, left on 10th. August. Had fear weather, everyone seasick as usual.

"Thankful to say Baby kept well as for self kept splendid. Very hot in the red sea, arrived at Port Said 25th, Sunday night. Couldent see much of the place left about midnight, got to Alger following Sunday, went ashore with Mrs S. It's a French Port, and Arabic, and couldent understand what they were saying. Arrived Dover early Sunday morning, on the 14th. I can tell you how glad I was to get on dry land again. Mrs S' cousin live at Dover, stayed 3 days, it is a very pretty little place I think, I like it very much. Left 16th for Reading, this is where Mrs S. means to stay at present.

"I have been to see Huntley Palmer's Great Biscuits Manufacturers. It is such a large place, I suppose it would take me quite two weeks to go around, however I had the pleasure of seeing some

of the principal works, it is all so wonderful, you cant think. We live quite a good way from town but I have been down many times. I can go out alone.[1] London is only a few miles away.

"The first time I went up was to see Mr Man. Mr Man did seem pleased to see me, just as much as I was to see him. He looks about the same. I saw no change in him. He gave me 1 lb to get myself something before we left. Next I went to see Sir Robert and Lady Temple up to London, fancy me in one of the London great Railways. Went and had tea in one of the great Salon. Went round Hyde Park, the Great Marbel Archway. Present to me from them Arabian nights. Hoped that I would enjoy reading it, felt inclined to send it flying the other end of the street.[2]

"Went up again with one of Mrs S's maids to see the sights. Went underground tube Railway, felt a bit frightened at first when the lift was going down and everything so wonderful. Got out near the Westminster Abbey, went round saw where all the Royalties are buried, and the chair on which King Edward was crowned and all the kings of England, it is such a beautiful old abbey. From there to Whitechapel where King Charles was imprisoned, then to the British Museum, went and had tea at the shops. Oh! London is a grand place. Next

[1] Evidently as pleasantly surprised at this as is an explorer when he finds the natives of an unknown land to be friendly.

[2] The learned donor, formerly Chief Commissioner of the Andamans, loved the folklore of the Andamanese, so probably thought his taste for fairy tales would be shared by his coloured friend. Not so, however.

week on to a visit to Windsor Castol went by 1.15 train. The Castol is the other side of the station. When I got there wonder of wonders, I never saw any place so beautiful. Went through all the state apartments, saw some of the most lovely things, sure it would take me pages to write all that I saw at the Castol. So you see I am enjoying England, in spite of fog and cold.

[Then come inquiries for friends, etc., ending up—]

"Yours

"TOPSY."

Topsy's very creditable letter having been considered, I will now describe the workshops of the settlement, which are built upon the large main island in a corner called Phœnix Bay. Here the convicts make cane chairs and carve wood. The Burmese do the latter work, and many of them do it extremely well. They also make boxes and tables of tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl, and build and repair boats; they forge iron gates, and in fact supply the island with most things needed in these ways. The men working here were those who had passed through their time at the Cellular Jail, but were not yet promoted to the greater freedom of domestic service, of road-mending, or of being fishermen. They returned to the Cellular Jail every night and were not allowed to talk at their work, but, as the overseers were all convicts, this rule was perhaps not always strictly observed. Those working with hatchets dropped their instruments, and sprang aside at the word of command as

we went through the shops—a rule which is a rather necessary precaution when dealing with armed murderers.

Prison authorities in England will not hear of the possibility of making well-behaved, long-term convicts into jailers; yet, since it works so extremely well in the Andamans, I cannot see why it should not be possible at home. A jailer is not likely to connive at escape, since then he would be degraded; and the possibility of a rise gives him an object for good behaviour and an ambition to keep the manhood in him alive. Because a man has happened to embezzle money or committed burglary, it does not follow that he would be incapable of filling a position of trust and responsibility in the limited capacity of a jailer.

Of course, in the Andamans I have heard it said that the outside workers do go very slowly to their occupation, and perhaps dawdle over it when it is reached. This their petty officer dares not reprimand too severely—which, being an Eastern, he would be unlikely to wish to do—as the men might turn round and kill him. On the other hand, the time lost in idling is made up for by the great economy in having convict petty officers. It must be remembered that these officers are put in charge of convicts working in the forests of the neighbouring isles, where, save for the visits of the white Forest Officers, they are entirely independent of control.

My Myi had been raised to this position before we met him, and wore a khaki uniform in place

of his former hemp and broad arrows. When serving the Forest Officer over him as servant in his house, as he sometimes did, he would wear his national costume, made of white linen, as do all the convicts in service.

The most severe punishment given in the islands is the wearing of an iron bar between the legs, which prevents their coming together. Those suffering from this penalty, which is nearly always incurred by bad behaviour in jail, are called the chain gang, and work on Viper Island. About forty escapes take place on an average each year, mostly because the convicts have an idea that they are very near India, and that the boat which conveys them to the Andamans goes round and round to make the distance appear long; this extraordinary belief encourages them in their attempts. Sometimes they run inland, when Jaruas, the wild Andamanese, kill them, or they die of starvation; sometimes they build rafts, and, with extraordinarily insufficient supplies, start out to sea, after which they are either captured or lost in the ocean. Some were found at Knochendam, the great, bare, volcanic island rock, of which I wrote before; and a very few reach home and go straight to their own villages, being thereby nearly always traced and recaptured. These escapes are made usually by the men working in the forests on islands other than the two chief isles, or else right down south on the main island.

One escape recalls the agonies of the "Ancient Mariner." A big Mohammedan made a raft, and,

with two cocoanuts filled with water, some rice and his Koran, he started forth to return to home and liberty. He had a sail of banana leaves, and was carried by the breeze to quite a distance from the isles, and for twenty-eight days he was alone on the sea. During the chilly nights his body was drenched with the cold dew which falls so heavily in the tropics, but it was probably due to this agonizing moisture, which filtered into the pores of his skin and thereby restored some of the liquid necessary to the human body, that he was enabled to live through the scorching days, when, unprotected from the sun, his parched throat and tongue caused him to yearn with consuming passion for the water which he had finished far too early in his terrible journey. Sharks followed him, so that he hardly dared to allow himself to sleep for fear of their invading the frail raft and glutting themselves upon his emaciated frame. To the manifold presences that move invisible over land and sea he must have presented a very terrible spectacle of mortal anguish—his skin broken and blistered with the heat, and his matted hair grown grey with suffering. His eyes, which testified to the growing instability of his brain, looked forth and met no responsive gaze, save the keen glance of the birds of the sea, regarding with wonder and curiosity his semi-prostrate form, and again beyond them the equally unanswering glint of the morning stars. In the vain attempt to moisten his swelling tongue, he perpetually sucked at his lips and gums, with the reiterated movement, sickening to behold, and

known only to those who have thirsted for many days, until at last, in raving desperation, he tore off a splinter of wood and cut his arm, that he might a little slake his thirst with the warm, fœtid blood, and wet his parched and breaking lips that were like wounds upon his face. Finally, after nearly a month of horror, he was picked up by the mail steamer, sixty miles from the Andamans, and taken back, an aged, dishevelled man, almost insane, who now greeted the sight of the jail as it were his home. Supported on either side, and slowly walking between serried ranks of convicts, he was shown to them as a living proof of the futility of attempting to escape.

. . . . . .

One morning we were rowed to Haddo, a port some way down on the main island. We were escorted by Major Wooley, who kindly showed us over the hospitals and the asylum. Here are sent the convicts who become ill or leprous, and the insane. The Andamanese are also admitted, and we saw one there—a boy with an enlarged spleen, that caused him to swell enormously. This is a common ailment amongst those in the settlement, due to the want of exercise which follows on their having enough to eat without the great efforts to obtain food to which they and their fathers have always been accustomed. The beds in the hospital were hard truckle pallets, but possibly not over uncomfortable to patients like the Hindus and



TATOOING A YOUNG ANDAMANESE

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Burmese, who are accustomed to lying on mats on the ground.

The lepers were a small community, suffering in various stages of the disease: one or two had lost toes and fingers, which had been eaten away by the scourge—poor maimed hands, the thumbs of which had perhaps in some cases been the witnesses that sealed their doom by testifying to their identity with the individuals whom justice was pursuing! Others had in the palm of their hands only, the hieroglyphic of death, the first letter of the long tale of their affliction, obscuring the lines wherein were written the records of their fate. These patients had comparative freedom, and could work in the garden and help to grow their own food. The Hindu doctor practising amongst them in the wards told me that they preferred having leprosy so as to escape the ordinary convict toil. This, if the case, I cannot understand, as when labouring they are never overworked. They are allowed to rest and sleep between twelve and two every day, and most of them work in the open—yet I know that sometimes in despair they rub lime into their eyes to destroy their sight and prevent their being able to work. I suppose it is that men prefer to labour with an object, even if it be the gruesome one of merely warding off starvation, and that a convict's toil just lacks an incentive, though in the Andamans it can hardly be said to do so. In the jails of Malay, I was told, on the contrary, that the prisoners dread Sundays because they have no work; and the Malay is quite as fond of

the *dolce far niente* as is the Hindu or Burman. Probably, as a whole, the convicts of the Andaman settlement prefer working to doing nothing, but a few desperate cases revolt against whatever is asked of them.

It may be interesting to say here that this question of work in the jails is dealt with in very various ways in the different countries of the West Coast of South America. For instance, in Guayaquil, the port of Ecuador, the prisoners are put into very large cages, where they have chairs and tables, and can talk and smoke and swear. One goes into the jail and sees them holding out from behind the bars toothpicks or nail-cleaners, which articles they have made from bones given to them with their meat or brought to them by friends, I know not which. Above them, in other cages, are women, huddled and sulky. The whole scene is of course revolting, but it may be pleasanter to them than would be a well-kept prison—one does not know.

In Lima, the capital of Peru, the house of detention is quite model, built on American lines, and containing workshops and cells and a chapel in the most modern style. A mediæval touch is, however, given by a place at the summit of one of the wings—a room which women are never shown, but where even to-day prisoners undergo the torture of cold dripping water falling drop by drop on one particular spot on their heads. This drives a man mad unless it is stopped when he reaches the limit of endurance, and a doctor always watches

the cruel infliction of this penalty. It is said that the inmates are also hung up by their thumbs, but I trust this is not true, and I cannot, fortunately, vouch for its being so.

In Bolivia the jails are pathetic, because in them there are wretched Indians, incarcerated for years, owing to their having been pressed, during a time of disturbance over the election of a President, into the service of a revolutionary, who had been outmanned by some other brigand—now probably the President. They do not know why they are being punished, and some of them went down on their knees as we passed along by their cells, where they sat in idleness wrapped in their coloured blanket-ponchos, and begged to be freed and restored to their mountains and their plains.

CHAPTER XII

OF TRAGIC FIGURES

"Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me and impute the Fall to Sin."

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

MURDERS occasionally occur amongst the convicts, and the offender is taken straight out and hanged without any preliminary ceremonies; on the whole, however, these murders are rare. Several years ago, on the main island, an Englishwoman was brutally killed by her servant, whom she had reprimanded, and her child was only saved by the heroic measures of his convict nurse. A very curious part of the life of the settlement are these convict nurses. It gave me a slight shock at first to see a prisoner, who, I was told, was a murderer, and who had a wooden ticket of crime round his neck and broad arrows on his coat, wheeling a child's perambulator; but this man had almost complete charge of one of the children on the island, and was much beloved by the little golden-haired girl, whom he always took out before the sun was too high in the heavens. Another case, somewhat similar, was that of a small English girl of two years old, whose nurse was a white-gowned Hindu who had served a term of fifteen years for

killing an Indian female child. She was the best nurse in the settlement, and this was her history.

She was married and lived in a bazaar in a northern town of India, and no child was born of her. Her husband was in turn angry and brutal, and finally indifferent, and she was ashamed, with the terrible shame of the barren woman of the East, for whom Assyrian and Hindu priests have invented a special hell. She went to a fakir—a fanatic, a madman, as this one must have been—and asked his advice. He wished to seem infallible in her eyes, I suppose, and to ensure this, resolved to tell her to do some impossible thing, that she, unable to perform it, might never say, "The fakir failed me." So, "Kill another woman's child—a girl," he ordered. The next day, almost opposite her door, she saw a neighbour's child playing, and she went out and murdered it in the street, in her terrible desire to produce a son. Then followed the transportation and the long term of convict life, but now she forgets all her sorrows in her devotion to the little golden-haired goddess who is entrusted to her.

Reverting, however, to the subject of the lepers, the Hindu doctor, who is in attendance on those in the hospital at Haddo, which we visited, told me that there is a remedy for leprosy, written in Sanskrit and kept secret.

After seeing the lepers, we went up to the lunatic asylum, where are the men who have become mad since their convictions. None of them suffered from the delusions of self-aggrandize-

ment. It would be interesting to ascertain whether Easterners ever do so suffer, or if this is merely a Western phase of madness. Those we saw were all given to mania or to homicide, or were merely stupid to the point of idiocy; and, in this connection, I was astounded to see a dribbling idiot, his tongue hanging out, and his head so shaped that he was clearly from birth microcephalous. Any crime he had committed he must have been forced into perpetrating, but more probably he had never done violence to anything, but had been a scapegoat for the sins of another. He was just as well off here as elsewhere, but having been exported as a criminal, he struck me as an anomaly—as soon transport an ape as this poor creature. Walt Whitman's comforting lines flashed through my head as I looked at him, and I was grateful for them :—

"I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering idiot they had at the asylum,
And I knew for my consolation what they knew not,
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother,
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenements;
And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,
And I shall meet the real landlord, perfect and unharmed, every bit as good as myself."

Most of these afflicted persons sat in attitudes of despair, but some talked loudly to Major Wooley as we went past. They were made to line up, and we walked between the ranks of these poor half-human beings. One of them made a lurch forward and fell at my feet, which was startling, but the saddest of our encounters was

yet before us. We entered a small passage with whitewashed cells, each of which had a gate made of iron rails, and a small barred window opposite this gate. Three of these cells were inhabited. One contained a man who had been there for two years, and who never spoke. He sat within, a huddled mass, and waited for death, his one idea murder, his one desire homicide. The hours, days, years must have been intolerably long, with nothing to mark them but the waning and waxing of the light, and the food that was passed into his living tomb. When I sent them later some tobacco to chew, they were allowed to have it, but pictures, or flowers, or books would have been useless. These three men lay on straw and would not wash or have their hair cut, nor were they decent or human in any way. Even the cells had to be cleaned out by warders as though the men within were animals. The man in the second cell had formerly been allowed to roam about the garden, but had refused to wear any clothes, and was as wild as a beast. He had climbed a tree and fallen, and was crippled. Up he came to the bars and spoke, and I believe his speech was beyond words horrible. He spat at us also.

One felt that the ancient Biblical and the modern spiritualistic idea of man being possessed of evil spirits was really the only explanation of people so absolutely lost to all humanity.

I always considered that, except for these three men, the habitual thieves were the saddest cases in the settlement. They were marked, as I have

said, with little red badges, and it was more difficult to promote them to any interesting labour than it was to raise the murderers. No one wanted them as servants, so the "habituals" rowed the boats, and worked at Phœnix Bay, and were watched continually. This perpetual thieving scarcely seems to be criminal, but is rather an absolute mania; it is so aimless, so unnecessary. The robbers, many of them, had had repeated convictions for theft, and then had again forfeited their liberty by taking a penny object from a stall in a bazaar; or had stolen something which certainly they must have desired less than their liberty. Captain Wooley, the medical officer, agreed with Lombroso's view of such cases, and regarded them as monomaniacs. We wondered if hypnotism might be the cure, and wished that someone in the jail would try it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MARRIAGE MARKET

"J'ai vu beaucoup d'hymens, aucuns d'eux ne me tentent:
Cependant des humains presque les quartre parts
S'exposent hardiment au plus grand des hasards;
Les quartre parts aussi des humains se repentent."

LA FONTAINE.

"He who is about to marry is on the road to repentance."

Greek Proverb.

ONE very hot day I went in a boat, kindly lent to me by Colonel Browning, and crossed over to the main island, there to attend the Saturday marriage-making at the female jail.

Before describing the object of my visit, let me recount the chief points which I observed in connection with the female jail. It is overseen by an Englishwoman, who has under her female convict officers in charge of the women, who have, if well behaved, five years only of jail, and can then marry or go into service. They make all the clothes for the male prisoners, but, when insubordinate, are put into a cell to tease wool with an old-fashioned instrument, shaped like a lute and fitted with cat-gut. The greatest punishment which can be inflicted upon a woman who is ill-behaved in jail is to cut the delinquent's hair. This ordeal was being

undergone by a sullen-looking female, nursing a ten-months old child, and her curious case was related to us. She was first confined in the prison for the most usual offence in the East—namely, husband murder. She was very probably driven to this by some great cruelty on the part of her possessor, as Hindus not infrequently beat their wives severely after their confinement if they have not given birth to a son, and very often chastise them when pregnant as a warning to them to do so. In due time she married again from the jail, and settled down in the Andamans with her bridegroom to finish their penal term in practically independent work. She gave birth to a child; and then took a dislike to her husband for no apparent reason. She went to the authorities and declared that she must either be divorced or put back into prison, for otherwise she would kill him. In vain they tried to persuade her to return to him, and they had at last to take her back to the jail. They were most unwilling to allow a precedent for divorce, and yet they could not well permit her to murder her second husband; so here she was, undergoing the utmost rigour of the law, as witnessed by her cropped head, but with an unyielding determination to take the man's life, were she made to return to him.

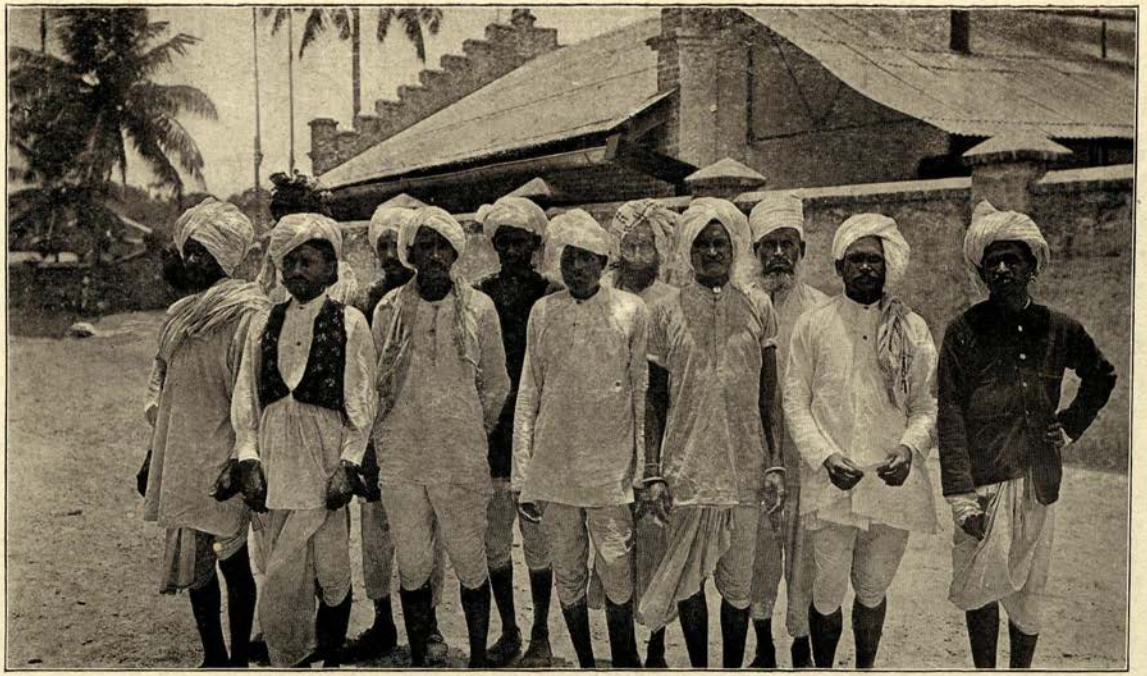
Women who are convicted when their children are very small, or who have babies born in prison, keep them in the jail. We saw these strange little offspring, among whom were many Pathans—beautiful, dark-eyed children, with their ears full of black cotton stitches in preparation for the time when

they would be beringed and bejewelled. When we took out the camera stand, they mistook the folding legs for rods and all howled simultaneously, which, we laughingly told the matron, looked as though they expected to be whipped; but they are all most kindly looked after.

Saturday is the day when the marriage market is held. The women are eligible for marriage through having been in prison for five years, and during that time having been well-behaved enough to be freed in this way. A man who has done his ten years is allowed to go to the jail, and to stand in a row with the others in front of the women. He points to the one he wants, and asks a few questions of the matron to what caste does she belong, and from what part of India does she come? etc.—and then, if the favoured person nods at him, they are allowed to go off together to the end of the verandah and squat down and talk things over. Often the man will come knowing of some special woman from another female prisoner who is married, and who tells the eligible bachelors of those who are suitable, and willing to wed. Only those women who wish to marry appear, but, if they prefer to be unwedded, they have to work out the remaining fifteen years in gaol or in private service. Very few female convicts are allowed to go into service, however, as it is impossible to have many on the two chief islands with such a great number of penal workers there; so that, except in Port Blair and in a few English people's houses on the main island, there are no women at all. I feel sure that the former regulation

referred to must have been made by a woman, for it demonstrates such a fine understanding of the penalties of marriage to our sex, since this provision shows that wedlock is estimated as a punishment equal to fifteen years' penal servitude. Many of the women elect to remain unmarried.

The day I went to the marriage market a motley crew of would-be bridegrooms were assembled before a most unbeautiful lot of women, all of whom were coy and refused even to speak to the suitors, excepting only one woman, who chose the oldest man in the group, and who is shown in the photograph. Another couple had a long talk, which was the fifth conversation they had had on that topic, I believe, but they did not arrive at terms. When the affair is settled between two convicts, an agreement to divorce has to be obtained from their respective spouses in India, and, unless this is forthcoming, the marriage is not allowed to take place. If, however, all is in order, they go before the Chief Commissioner and are officially married; and then they live in huts at some distance from the gaol, but still on the main isle. They there cultivate coffee or cocoanuts, under the supervision of an official, and with certain restrictions, but in almost complete freedom. They are called the "self-supporters." Many people think it wrong thus to promote a breed of children with criminal parents, and the children are said to be very uncontrolled and naturally of rather a low type; but, as the crimes of these people are usually committed in moments of passion, the tendency inherited from them would be



THE WOULD-BE BRIDEGROOMS
(Photo by Violet Clifton)

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more likely to be a lack of self-control than any actual brutality or murderous instinct. Infanticide is a much less frequent cause of penal servitude amongst the Hindus than is husband murder, which shows that the cruelty of the man is often the cause of the woman's crime; and a point to be noted is that a Burmese woman is rarely if ever found here; which shows that greater indulgence and kindness towards the wife becomes a sort of unconscious life insurance policy in those rare parts of the East where it is the custom of the country.

I was delighted to hear that one of the prospective bridegrooms, when asked by his possible bride what fault had brought him to the Andamans, had answered that he was "a financier." He must presumably have lived in the United States at some time to have given that title so elastic a meaning, for he was a most consummate rogue, and had made a small fortune by his clever and long-undiscovered dishonesties, practised upon his employers both before and after his immigration to the Convict Isles.

CHAPTER XIV

OF LORD MAYO AND OTHER MATTERS

"Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

THE pleasures of life for the English inhabitants are few and limited. Fishing, of course, is the chief sport, but during the wet season, which lasts for about half the year, it is difficult to pursue. Tennis, bathing in the baths, and very poor golf on the main island are the other pastimes. The sea between the two isles is infested with sharks, so that bathing there is impossible. A shark was caught by the side of a small official steamship, just before we arrived in the Andamans. When they opened her, these were her contents—a bullock's head with horns, some sheep's feet and half a sheep —besides eight unborn sharks.

In the dry season the residents at Port Blair can be rowed over to the large main isle and visit their friends, or go to the fruit market, or play golf; but in the wet season the water is very rough, so that they are confined for months to their five-mile Ross Island, which must be terribly monotonous.

The Forest Officers have houses somewhat

isolated, and go to their districts in the Chief Commissioner's yacht or in a smaller boat. One whom we met lived in the main isle, in a house perched on a hill, which had been built by an Englishman, who was transported for the murder of his wife and daughters in a sudden homicidal fit complicated with religious mania. He killed them all in a frenzy of passion at having been disturbed whilst reading his Bible. He was a very well-educated man, and was the only Englishman I ever heard of who had been sent to the Andamans. After great remorse at his deed, during a long period of calm, he again became unbalanced, and had, I believe, to be sent back to some house of detention in India.

Near Port Blair are two other inhabited isles, one of which is no larger than a London square. It has a big saw-mill on it, and a house for the Forest Officer, and much work is done there. Another island is called Viper, where a chain-gang work, consisting, as has been said, of the worst of the convicts. A few officials live here also.

We lunched on Viper, some charming English people having invited us to rest there on our return from visiting a creek on the main isle and Port Meerut, where are the "self-supporters." I had to be carried up to our host's house because of the steepness of the road, for in the great heat one feels any incline. The mode of carrying was very elementary, and I much disliked it, as I felt that the weight on the convict carriers was enormous. A chair was balanced on two long, heavy poles, and these they put on their shoulders, two men going

in front and two behind: the chains and poles alone weighed a good deal. We tried to introduce the light "masheelah," as used in Africa, instead of these enormous conveyances.

The paths of Viper Isle are beautiful, being hedged in by rows of scarlet *hibiscus*, like flames along the way, but to many the island is associated only with loathing, and it is often called "Hell" on account of the character of the convicts who are incarcerated there.

The only health resort of any kind in the group is Mount Harriet, situated on the main South Andaman Island in the Harbour of Port Blair. There are a few bungalows on the Mount, where children and invalids go to benefit by the cooler temperature to be found at that height. This lovely place is, nevertheless, a spot of tragic memory, for, by the sea at the foot of the hill, Lord Mayo, former Viceroy of India, was stabbed in the back after having been escorted up to see the magnificent view from the summit of Mount Harriet. He died quietly and nearly instantaneously, almost his last words being that he was not much hurt. The story of the cause of his death is curiously instructive, for it reveals an outlook on justice which is particularly Eastern. His murderer had long been the faithful servant of a British officer. He was a Pathan, and had—as have most of them—an ancestral enemy. Perhaps, generations before British rule, a wild hillsman had killed his far-back forbear, and then had sprung into being the thought of hate, which ultimately de-

veloped, evolved, and grew, till it indirectly caused the death of the Viceroy, so strange and intricate are the sowings and reapings of fate. Blood was due from the offending family: the murderer had died, but the debt remained, and the avenging children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren forgot it not. The Pathan heard the call of the spilt blood, and he asked leave to go and end the long feud by causing the death that must wipe it out. His white chief told him to go, but to remember the penalty which follows murder on the British side of the frontier. The man went; his ancestral enemy knew that he was being pursued, and came over to British territory. The soldier Pathan could not lose his opportunity, and so, in spite of his knowledge of consequences, he killed the man. He was tried; he was condemned to death; and then, alas, his master pleaded for him. He was granted "extenuating circumstances," and was sentenced to a life of penal servitude in lieu of death. He begged to be hanged. Foolishly the judge refused to hear him, and he was sent to the Andamans. He brooded for years, his heart was burnt out with bitterness. He hated the white man. Had he been hanged, he would have gone gaily to his death, but this long-drawn-out indignity he could not bear. He was no poor unimaginative native; he was a wild hillsman, and even his revenge was ambitious. He determined to take the life of some important Englishman. He had probably intended the death of the Chief Commissioner; then Lord Mayo came. Our Pathan was not suspected of thirsting for

vengeance, and therefore easily neared the great white man, and, in the dusk, just as Lord Mayo was going aboard the launch to return to Ross, he stabbed him mortally so that he died in a few minutes, with the request on his lips that his head should be raised. The Pathan was hanged the next day.

The Chief Commissioner most kindly lent us his charming bungalow on Mount Harriet, and we went to it for a week-end. I rode up to the bungalow, which stands at a height of eight hundred feet above the sea level. The view from the top of the hill and from various bends in the road is superb, with a vast panorama of sea and of islands. The great delight of Mount Harriet is that, owing to the coolness, roses and honeysuckle grow, and a charming garden is kept for supplying the Chief Commissioner with flowers and vegetables. The blossoming trees of the tropics never quite make up to English people for the green lawns and flower-beds that they love, so to find these here was delightful. On Mount Harriet one sees parrots and lovely multicoloured birds, and wild pig have been found, but the island is otherwise extraordinarily poor in animal life.

We walked about on the roads and on the paths in the island, looking for orchids, but only saw a few in the trees, so we sent some convicts out under a Burmese petty officer, My Myi, whose history I have related, and who had been lent to us for the purpose of collecting. Next day they brought in three kinds of *Dendrobium secundum*. One was the

lovely pigeon orchid, then in bloom, the long sprays of which are covered with leaves, and with sweet-scented white flowers that open and die in the same day. They look like flocks of pigeons, lazily stretching their wings as the day advances, and at last fully opening them like birds in strong flight: then towards evening they gradually sleepily fold up their wing-like petals, and in the night they die.

We were also brought some *Dendrobium crumenatum* of a yellow variety and some less striking dendrobiums. After a few days we returned to Port Blair to take up our orchid gathering in earnest.

CHAPTER XV

THE PILGRIMAGE

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore."

Byron.

THE Chief Commissioner was good enough to lend us his yacht, the *Nancowrie* which was manned with convict sailors, though the captain was a free man, and had never been a convict. He was, unfortunately for us, completely ruled by the rascally engineer. We boarded her on the 22nd of March, escorted by Mr. Bonig, the Forest Officer, a German by birth, but a naturalized Englishman. Hearing that he had a wife who had been suffering from fever, we went back to fetch her, and she gladly joined us. I will take up this part of my narrative in diary form, as I then kept one, and I think it the better way of describing this part of the pilgrimage.

Tuesday, 22nd.—We weighed anchor at noon, and steamed off at the perilous rate of seven knots an hour, this being about the speed we averaged during the trip.

First we went to Rutland Island, south of the

Main Island, and, landing, saw two "must" elephants with chains round their feet, like convicts, for even elephants here are criminal, it appears. Their vicious little eyes looked full of murder, and, when we approached the larger one, he trumpeted on seeing Mr. Bonig, whom he recognized, as he had once before gone mad and made a long night hideous walking round and round a hut (under the elevated floor of which some men had sheltered) tearing down gradually the sides and roof of it, till at last Mr. Bonig managed to slip out and wound him, for elephants are too valuable to be killed. They become cold-blooded, logical murderers when in this state. None of the Hindu convicts working on the isle cared to come near this one, although he was chained to the trunk of rather a feeble-looking tree. The coolies had built platforms in the trees to climb on to in case he got away. He had had no water, poor brute, for several days, and was grateful when Mr. Bonig forced the men to put a bucket within his reach.

One sees when these animals are "must" by an escape from the must gland near the eye. I do not understand why the male elephants—they are the afflicted ones—are not rendered calmer by a surgical operation, but I presume they are caught too late for it to be performed.

We afterwards went into a mangrove swamp, and the convicts again carried me on a heavy chair swung on poles, such as has been described; but they puffed and grunted so much that I did not lack mercy sufficiently to continue in this way, and

therefore I got off. We plunged up to our knees in the swamp. I had a very short khaki dress on fortunately, but I shall wear Talbot's knickers in future. When we reached the trees, they presented a most weirdly beautiful sight, for they are very tall, like the great pillars of a vast cathedral. Their stems are straight as mighty columns, and their branches form arches high up over the earth. The crowning mass of foliage resembles the domed roof of a temple not built by man. The roots of the trees are aerial, which adds still more to their architectural effect. We went on in the dim jungle till we reached a stream with delicate white flowers overhanging it, deliciously scented, very stars in this dense forest, eternally shading these colourless blossoms, which seemed like children in a city, pale for want of light. We sent a convict up the trees for them, as they were covered with ants. When we saw them close, to our joy they were *Phalænopsis tetraspis*. I suppose I am the only white woman who has ever seen these growing wild.

Wednesday, 23rd.—We slept on deck, Talbot and I, with our bunks up in the prow, which is our sitting-room and dining-room by day; with Mr. and Mrs. Bonig behind us in the narrow part with a sail between us, and Edward on the opposite site. Then come some steps, and then the crew, whose numbers far exceed what would be necessary were they Britishers, and who, with the inevitable Sikh guard, form an effectual barricade to the "bath-room"

beyond them. A little white goat, which gives us milk, sleeps with them in this part of the ship. Then comes the galley; and we have brought Lazarus to cook for us. Below is a large cabin with bunks, but it is too hot to sleep there. We all wash and dress in this room in turns.

The Bonigs have brought their Burmese petty officer, My Myi, whom we had with us on Mount Harriet; he is a splendid man, and very keen about orchids.

We went on shore early and saw an elephant pushing heavy logs into the water with his head. Mrs. Bonig still has remnants of fever and could not come. We visited the big "must" elephant again, and made him charge Mr. Bonig so as to get a photograph. Unfortunately we could not get one at all clearly. The charge was exciting, as the tree quivered and shook each time that the elephant rushed forward. As all the natives had at this juncture taken refuge in the trees, the task of urging him forward and of attempting to photograph him fell to the Explorer and myself. Mr. Bonig had come ashore earlier, and found the foot chains so tight that they were eating into the beast's legs, so he had to alter them, no small undertaking with a male elephant, but they are wise even in their "must" times, and he did not interfere with his own good, but allowed Mr. Bonig to change them. He is getting better daily.

We then cruised to the other side of Rutland, and, taking a launch, went up a creek in a man-

grove swamp. As we went we scanned the trees for orchids, and stopped when we saw any, and then My Myi clambered ashore and cut them down for us. We found some dendrobiums, which were the most prevalent species, also some *Æridies* in the darkness of the jungle, colourless for want of sun, but marvellously sweet-scented. We saw again the delicate outlines of the *Phalænopsis tetraspis*, as usual covered with ants when My Myi got it down. It is a good one, but we doubt its reaching England alive. *Phalænopsis* are the most difficult to manage, as one cannot dry them off like the others. Edward, who was with us, had orders to sprinkle it every day with fresh water. We walked for about two miles, through a jungle full of variegated trees, down a good track, part of which had been laid for a trolley. This clearing made our progress easier than it would have been had we been obliged to thrust our way through the pathless jungle.

Wherever we go one or two Sikh guards follow us, lest the convicts should kill us; sometimes, to tease these shadows of ours, if only one is with us, Talbot and I separate in the jungle. The Sikh usually decides on following me, but he preens about anxiously till I rejoin his other charge.

Once on the other side of the neck of the island we had a delicious picnic of fruit and biscuits which we had brought, and we drank the water of green cocoanuts split at the top. With a little lemon added to the liquid, this makes a perfect beverage. We afterwards rigged up a tent, and then bathed. I had to keep on my underclothing

as I had no bathing dress with me. Mrs. Bonig would not come because she is frightened of sharks. We made plenty of noise to keep them off, but it is not very likely that they would come so close to the shore, though there were several swimming about farther out. The Sikh guard also refrained from bathing. The sea is delicious, so full of sun and warmth; shallow too, and with sand to lie upon. We rested in the water, watching the sun getting low, and I thought over the perfect day, full of orchids and sun and beauty, so far from the trivialities of housekeeping and beyond the reach of the daily duties and activities which throng around one at home—just I and Talbot, with the same interests and no ties in different directions: absolute perfection, though I do not always think so, as the babies are not here!

Then Talbot and Mr. Bonig went into the forest after pigeons, and I sat on the shore and thought of one's life after death. It would be so delightful, for instance, to revisit for a moment the Tropics, freed from "Brother Ass," as St. Francis called the body, which in the East is always hot and mosquito-bitten and a drag, though mentally one enjoys everything so entirely. Possibly though as a spirit, I should not have enjoyed the bathing as much, nor the ride on a she elephant afterwards, which finished the day.

Thursday, 24th.—We took the steam launch in the morning, and went trolling. In the green depths of the sea is beautiful coral, mauve and

white. I never knew that coral is alive; at least filled with living atoms, and that when, on shore, one comes on any that is dead, it has lost its colour and becomes like a grey stone. It also has a disagreeable smell. This is not the coral of commerce, which is different in many ways, though it is of the same order, of course, as that which we saw.

We got no fish, alas, though we had expected *barakuta*, which sometimes weighs up to eighty pounds; or *dugong*, a species of sea mammal, which cetacean monster weighs up to two hundred pounds. We afterwards sailed to Somoopli (Labyrinth Isles), the waters of which are uncharted and the sea passage difficult on this account, and somewhat dangerous.

When we landed and entered the jungle we came upon an orchid which was entirely new to us. This was a dendrobium, probably a natural hybrid, its colour a purple lilac, but in shape very small and terminate. A part of the jungle here was curious, weird enough to have stood for a picture by Boecklin. A forest of death with gaunt, grey trees, leafless and decaying, standing in the swamp which had sucked from them all life, this would form the foreground of the picture, whilst the background would be the thick creepers and trees, all struggling together for light and for existence. The sea water is gradually stealing on the jungle here, spreading its area of desolation as it presses on. I sat long on a stump in company with many ants, whilst Talbot hunted orchids. On the branches of the dead trees perched birds which I

had not seen before—green parrots with long tails, and the *Palcavruis fascinatus*, with its radiant pink breast; the *raik*, or *tail drongo*, all black with long black tail-feathers, and the stork-billed kingfishers, green and brown with red breasts. The variety of birds, especially perhaps in the parrot family, is immense. The pigeons are like the English ones, save that they have a lustrous green sheen, and are called the Andaman species. The quaintest creatures of this dead wood are small amphibious fish, rather bigger than the tadpole, with extraordinary bulging eyes like weird little gollywogs. They move with great rapidity, and I watched them with interest, teasing them in and out of small puddles, till their eyes bulged the more, and they all seemed to be in the last stages of "Graves' Disease."

I forgot to say that in the morning we had seen five elephants ridden by their Hindu mahouts right into the water, and urged to swim across to the island opposite by means of prongs like toasting forks, weapons whereby these fellows guide the elephants. All of them resisted and refused, trying to submerge their riders and rid themselves of the tiresome masters perched on their necks. Neither man nor beast appeared to get angry. Elephants *can* swim, but I think none of that lot could be forced over the water.

Friday, 25th.—A disagreeable day, passed in steaming slowly from the southern to the middle islands, which we reached at 7.30. We then

bathed in the moonlight, and went to sleep looking at luna and the stars.

During this day I have heard and read as much as I can concerning the language of the Andamanese. Language is such a treasury of folklore, ideals, and history that often a labourer will unconsciously reveal the annals of his origin in some simple country phrase. A Norse word will come into the utterance of an Orcadian crofter, which at once opens up a view of wild conquests centuries before; or some English word, debased from its meaning, will make one yearn back to the days of ideals as its great origin flashes across one. The Andamanese speech is, it appears, a kind of love-child amid the other languages. It stands alone and isolated, more ancient than all the present utterances of man. The twelve tribes of the Andamanese all speak different dialects, but these are clearly of one origin. They have never been transcribed, except by Sir Richard Temple and Mr. Man, who wrote down the Lord's Prayer in Andamanese. They have, of course, very few abstract words, just as they have very few abstract ideas; in fact, their language circles as exclusively as is possible round their own anatomy, and almost every expression is somehow connected with their bodies or attributes of them. They speak jerkily and use very few connecting words, but as their conversation revolves usually upon their fishing, turtle-spearing, or pig-hunting, a few plain words suffice to express their actions, and to their brief narrations they add gestures and mimicry.

Saturday, 26th.—We landed at seven in the morning, I being arrayed in Talbot's khaki trousers, which seemed somewhat to astonish the Sikh guard, though their own women wear trousers.

The forest here is different from that in the southern isles, with less undergrowth and no mangrove swamps. We did plunge into a foul-smelling morass, however, which was covered with low bushes and reeds, and here we waded waist-deep, whilst Mrs. Bonig stood on the edge of it with the Sikh guard and trembled lest a hundred harmful things (of her imagination) might attack her.[1] Her husband and mine shot teal for our pot, but unfortunately lost a large quantity in the mud, though we picked up enough for our immediate wants. We saw pigeons and herons and plover, and the footprint of the small wild pig.

The men on board, meanwhile, had caught a rock cod, pink-fleshed and delicious, weighing fifteen pounds. This we ate at "brunce," the meal combining breakfast and lunch, which we always have at eleven o'clock; and, as our milk supply was limited, or rather the little white goat's was, we ate porridge with cocoanut milk, which made quite a good substitute.

In the afternoon we sailed for Havelock, which we reached in a couple of hours. Here we had hoped to find some aborigines, but they had just left in their boat, and we saw their sail on the blue

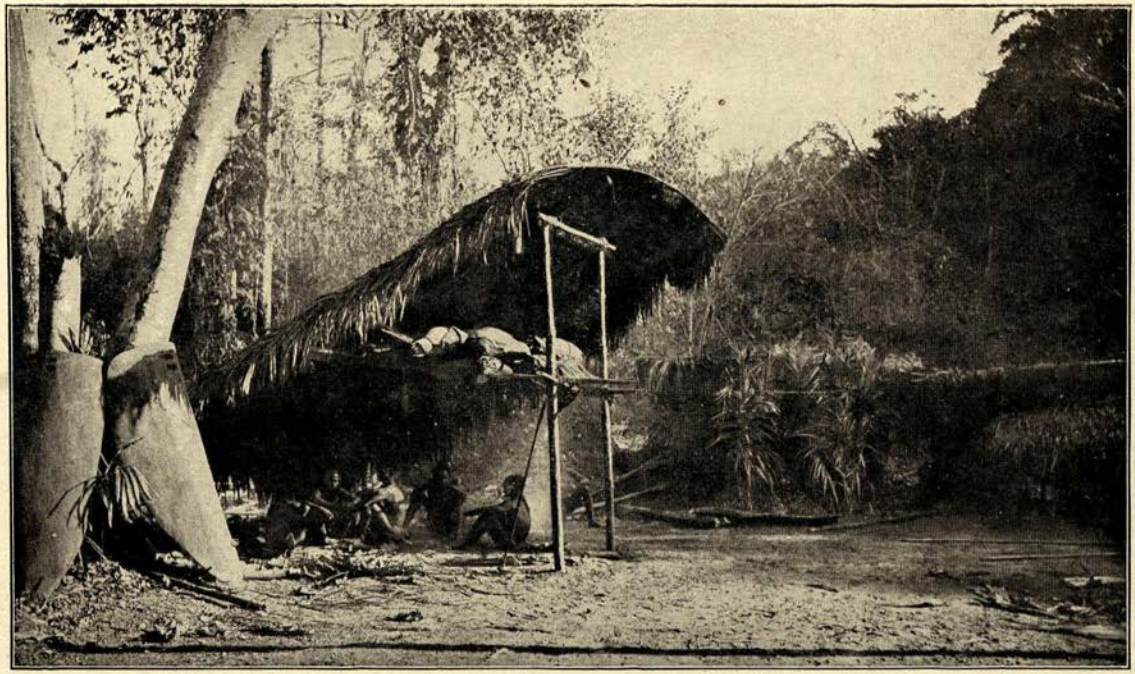
[1] The reader will by this time have gathered that Mrs. Bonig and the Sikh guard were the only members of the party who had any common sense, which fact will often be illustrated by further events.

waters, a very treasured possession to them, and one they seldom attain to, as they are unable to make sails and have to procure them, as well as many other goods, by occasional barter only.

A convict was near their deserted huts, and these dwellings we inspected. They are thatched with palm, and the eaves come down almost to the ground, but they have no walls and are only temporary dwellings, as the people wander about where they think they can best find food; when one place is fœtid and stinking and swarms with flies, as did this one, they leave it and seek another. They usually have a central square for dancing, and twelve or fourteen huts in which sixty people, or more, might shelter are grouped around this open space. Each hut has by it what first appears to be a small stone altar, on which a perpetual fire burns and smoulders incessantly. This is the fire of the Lares and Penates for it cooks the food, the Andamanese having quite good ideas as to the culinary art and knowing how to prepare a variety of dishes.

After our inspection we went back to our draughts and our books on board. Shakespeare is our chief literature, for he fits in with any surroundings, being true always, though the jungle and the sea make many philosophies and romances appear pale and unreal. With Shakespeare one is equally in tune in a twentieth century city or in the wilds of the world.

Sunday, 27th.—We sailed round to another point of Havelock, and there to our joy found the Adams



THE STORE-HUT

Here are kept the larger possessions of the Aborigines

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and Eves (Andamanese). They were sheltering under the beautiful branches of the trees that grow along the sea-shore. All of them were naked to the waist, and there the costume adopted by them was singular indeed. The men wore no loin cloths, but only a bunch of beads, or else a strip of red cotton tied in a sack. The women wore large bustles of leaves or seaweed, fixed on to a belt of cane, so their back view was well covered, but in front they had only one long leaf in the classical position. They paint a little, using a yellowish colour to adorn their bodies, whilst on their faces they put white marks. They also often scarify their flesh with glass, which gives it a strange and wavy look—but this we did not see, as it is done only in the south.

They are amongst the few aborigines who cannot make fire, so they travel about with smouldering wood, and, like vestal virgins, never allowing the flame to die. Extinction of fire is punished by the natives more severely than any other crime—usually, indeed, by death, as it is one of the necessities of the people. Nearly all their other goods are communal, so that theft is practically unknown.

These aborigines were smoking clay pipes given them by Forest Officers: otherwise, presumably, they would only know the joys of chewing, as they do not grow any tobacco. The little tribe of from fifteen to twenty people were led by an Andamanese of another tribe, who had been christened in the English community, and was called Luke. He had lived for many years with a former Chief Commissioner named Portman, and had learnt the Christian

theology, the English language, Hindustani and the sciences of photography and piloting. He told me he had not liked his time in the settlement—"No fun, and always sickness," he said—yet Portman had made pets of the Andamanese, and given them bicycles and champagne, relieved by occasional beatings. In character the Andamanese most resemble a certain minority of the sporting squires of England, their minds being filled only with the joys of sport and the charm of satisfied stomachs. They are a delightful people, light-hearted and changeable, capable—if one may judge from the few individuals whose brains had been developed (Topsy and Luke most especially)—of learning and grasping things quite outside their own natural knowledge, and, of course, extremely efficient in their proper arts, such as spearing fish and shooting with arrows. The latter they did remarkably badly in the Andamanese home near Port Blair, but I believe that in the jungle they are good marksmen.

Some of the women whom we saw had their woolly hair cut in curious shapes like the bedding-out of low box plants in a fantastic garden. This effect had been produced by shaving one another with glass or with flakes of quartz, which latter is the only implement made of stone which is known to these backward children in this far-off nursery of the world.

Their eyesight is the only one of their senses which is keener than it is amongst people of the occident. Their nervous organization being less

developed, they are happy in not feeling pain with the same excessive poignancy that white people of the twentieth century experience when wounded or injured. They have not as much staying power as a healthy Englishman.

After "brunch" we rowed to the shore. Mrs. Bonig, however, would not come. She is so nervous, poor little lady, owing to her prolonged ill-health, that she does not enjoy doing anything, and even paddling appears to her to be in some way dangerous.

As we neared the shore, a huge *surmi*, which must have weighed fifty pounds or more, escaping evidently from some other monster of the sea, very nearly jumped into our boat, as it sprang out of the water in its wild leap for life.

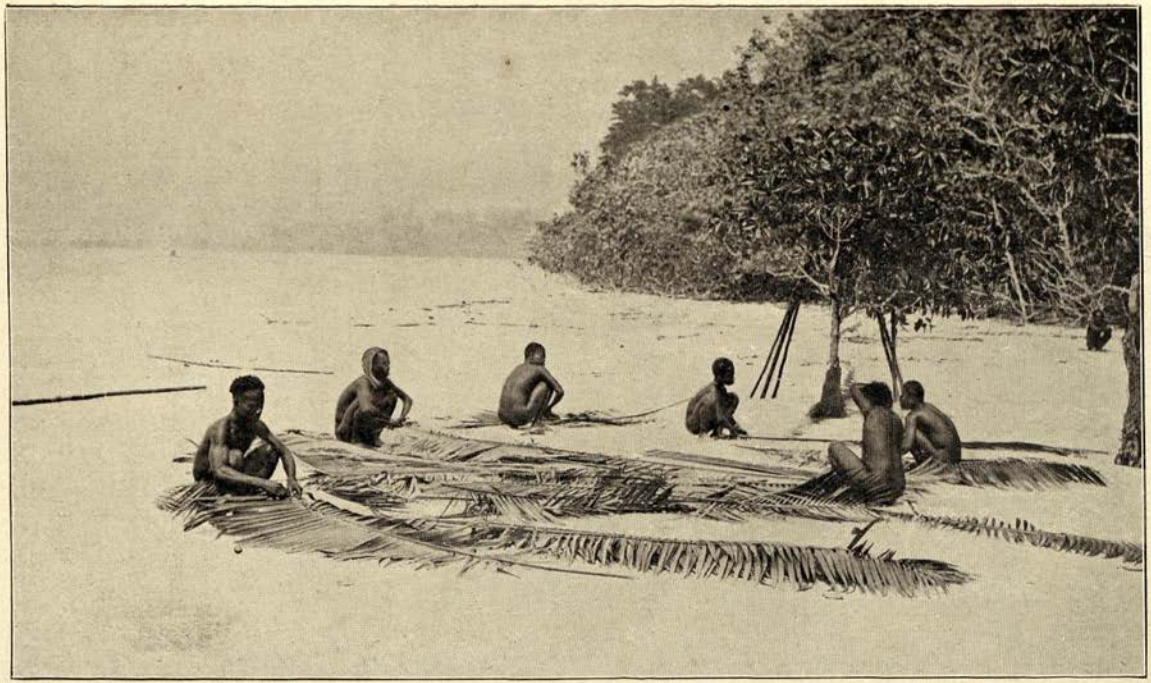
The rest of the events of the afternoon I shall narrate in the Explorer's words, as he, being a hunter, can draw a better picture of sporting hours than can I.

"On landing we asked the aborigines whether they would take us in their dug-outs—native canoes about forty feet long and made of reddish wood—and show us how they speared turtle. They at once consented. It was interesting to watch from the dug-outs, of which there were three, the perfect line they kept, each one two hundred yards from the other and all abreast. The bamboo pole, with which they punt in shallower water, they convert into a harpoon; the point and detachable end is placed in a well-fitting groove with a long line attached. A fathom of loose line hangs over the

right shoulder of the native, so that, in punting, his actions are free, as also when casting a harpoon at a turtle. When he does this, however, he throws himself into the water to add an impetus which causes the head of the weapon to go deeply into the tortoise's thick shell. A large turtle will tow a dug-out for some distance, but when it gets tired a small boy will jump into the water, turn the turtle on its back, and help in that fashion to get it into the canoe. It often happens that a large turtle, when being hoisted aboard, will upset the canoe."[1]

"Within two hours we managed to harpoon four turtle and also two large skate, the tails of which the Andamanese use for some mysterious purpose. Skate being inedible, we would have had the unfortunate monster released from the Andamanese weapon, had this been possible, but the native could not get it out, and the great animal fought furiously with his poisonous speared tail. Then the second man in the canoe did an extremely plucky thing. He seized with his teeth the harmless and upper portion of the tail, which has two points, the lower one of which is covered with protuberances that cut like poisoned knives. Thus holding it, he cut off that portion of the skate's anatomy which he could not have grasped with his hand. The four turtles were converted into soup and turtle steaks during the next four days, for turtle steak is first-class food, somewhat resembling

[1] I armed myself with a lifebelt in case of accidents, which are not infrequent occurrences when indulging in turtle spearing.—V. C.



ANDAMANESE PREPARING A THATCH FROM PALM-LEAVES

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chicken and veal, to both of which it is, however, superior.

"We then proceeded on a wild-pig hunt, the natives bringing their pariah dogs with them. This island was only two miles round. Soon after starting through the thick, tropical jungle we came across a wild-bee hive. A fine young Andamanese soon climbed the tree, using his prehensile toes, and, after brushing the bees from the comb with his hands, notwithstanding that they were swarming around him in hundreds, he broke off the honeycomb and came down with his prize. On this occasion he was not stung. I asked him through an interpreter how he accounted for his immunity from stings, and he replied that the bees were frightened of him.[1] This honey is sweeter and more golden than the honey of Hymettus, being made from the treasury of the orchids, and has a wonderful taste unlike any other.

"We then returned to our pig hunt, and soon we heard the yapping of the Andamanese village pack. Suddenly a pig came straight for me, hotly pursued by the dogs. There was no way for me to move aside in that thick jungle, so, when the beast was close up, I hopped over its back. Fifteen yards farther on an Andamanese shot it through the

[1] I think the Andamanese based his assumption on a wrong premise, as my idea is that bees do not sting only as long as they are *not* frightened. I once had my arms full of bees, put there by the owner of the hive, and they did not sting me; nor, when I take them off the orchids in the hothouses at home, do they do so, and this is simply because I know where to pick them up and do not fuss or irritate them into the self-defence, which they probably instinctively know will cost them their lives.—V. C.

heart with his bow and arrow, with which the natives are very expert. On our way back to the encampment we came across another enormous honeycomb; this time the native who brought it down was stung twice.

"The jungle on our way back was so thick that the Burmese native convicts who were with us had to cut a path through it with their dahs. As we had no fresh fish, we asked the natives to spear some for us, which they quickly did."

The pig had to be roasted on shore, cut into small pieces, and smuggled on board, where we kept it in a boat attached to the ship's side, for otherwise the Mussulman crew would have considered the ship defiled by the unclean animal, and might even have mutinied.

During our absence, the crew had caught a huge fish weighing a hundred and forty pounds. It had a very small mouth, and was possibly a ground shark. We wished to skin it and keep the skeleton to send to a museum, in case it was a valuable species, but the carcase smelt too disagreeable. *Dugong* are worth about £80 for museums, and it has happened that specimens of them have been thrown overboard through people not knowing their value.

The Andamanese had generously given us all the turtle which had been speared that afternoon, and of this I was very glad, as they are extremely cruel to the poor animals, leaving them on their backs in the sun for days after taking them ashore, and then roasting them alive. It made me posi-

tively hate them when I heard of this and saw some poor beasts suffering thus; but all savages are cruel—all savages and most boys!

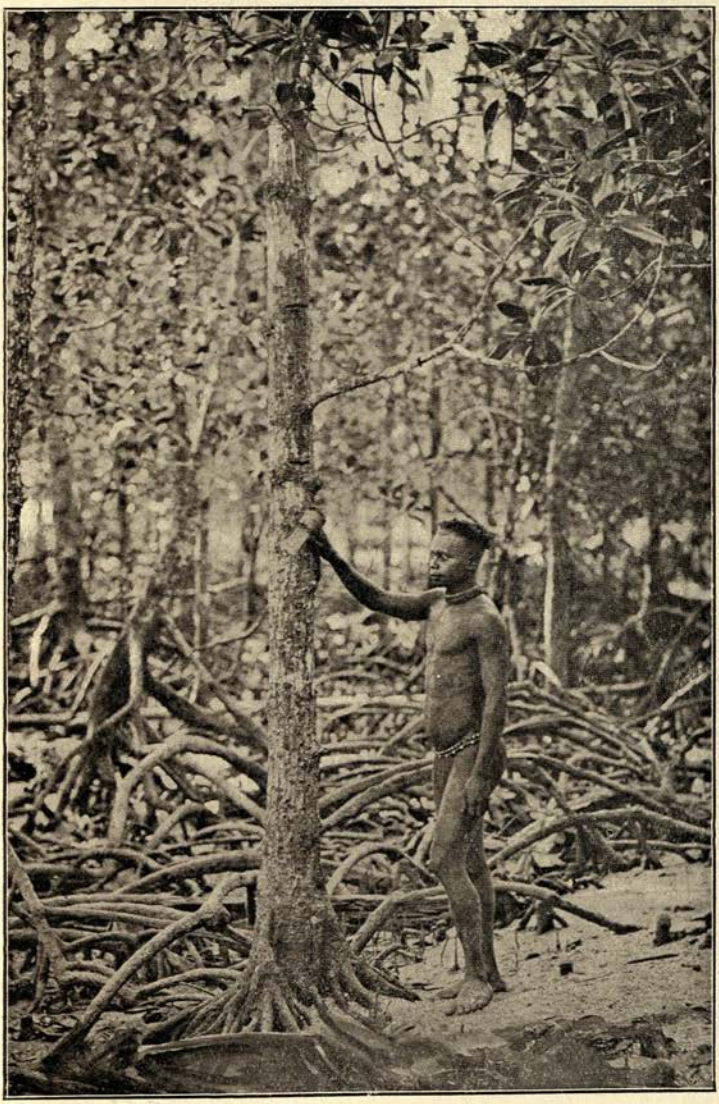
I had been thinking in the canoe that it might be good to send our son out to some friendly tribe for a year or two, and let him live mainly by his skill, the healthy open life of a savage; but there is just that great drawback, that his growing nature, cruel at that age, might be permanently moulded to worse barbarities. For, as the human embryo goes through all the forms of reptile, bird and lower animal before it is born a child, so the child, before his manhood, goes through the fears, the superstitions, and the cruel phases of the savage. Thus does every individual exemplify the great stages through which man has passed on his way to our present place in the universe.

On the tablets of my memory I shall always carry the impression of this afternoon of turtle spearing, the two Andamanese, one posed at either end of the canoe, upright and perfectly balanced, with their ebony bodies standing against the turquoise sky, as beautifully formed as small Greek statues, they seemed, with the elf-like peaked caps of green leaves which they wore to lessen the midday heat and their girdles of red cotton or blue beads, like some denizens of another planet or another age, children of nature, perfectly adapted to their happy, careless lives. They are, curiously enough, strangely liable to sunstroke, which, as it often proves fatal to them, they are always very anxious to avoid.

Later on in the evening we went on shore to see the natives dance. They had built up many fires, and the men had blazing logs both before and behind them as they danced, the flames of which made a most effective staging to their movements. The women squatted round in a circle on the ground, and kept time by patting their naked thighs. The men danced the great "turtle dance," which expresses joy in the chase and wishes for future success to the Nimrod. They improvised words which were given in a sing-song voice. The phrasing was elementary, of course, only mere statements of the day's sport without much poetic idea. Afterwards, with branches in their hands, they stamped and jumped and did rhythmic steps. Talbot copied one step which they had done, and this performance gave them intense pleasure. They laughed shrilly, and the laugh of the Andamanese is delightful—a sort of chuckling and gurgling of joy.

The women were mostly fat and ungainly. "My thin one," is the chief form of endearment among them, used by their husbands, but this must be meant figuratively, I should imagine. The Andamanese have one wife only, and married people are faithful to each other, though the women are not so careful of their morals before marriage. One chief we heard of was trying to make an innovation by having two wives, but was not *bien vu*.

Monday, 28th.—We steamed through the beautiful Homfray Strait, going at about four-and-a-half knots an hour. This part represents to the Anda-



THE JUNGLE

It was in this kind of forest that we found the Phaeleonopsis Tetraspis

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manese their Garden of Eden, for they think that the first man and woman of their race beheld the sun from this mighty jungle. The trees in the Strait stand out like pillars, with the green forming a canopy above them. They are *padouk* trees and their trunks are of a reddish colour, which gives a beautiful effect.

Tuesday, 29th.—We steamed away late in the morning, and had several hours of sea, arriving at sunset at the point which we wished to reach. The sky was purple and grey, very inspiring, but menacing and terrible. Suddenly the rain broke and came down in torrents. Mrs. Bonig is very ill with fever, but will not take quinine in doses that would do her any good. Talbot tried to force her to have ten grains, but she would not take them, in spite of his saying that he knew a good deal about medicine, as he had passed his veterinary surgeon's examination, and had often dosed animals. I do not think this over-pleased her, nor did my well-meant and customary form of encouragement, "Cheer up; you'll soon be dead," seem to carry the comfort it was meant to convey.

I took away the curl of an Andamanese yesterday, that is, he gave it to me. It did not appear to be hair at all, but wool, just like the curl off a sheep's back. It grows all over the heads of the natives, like a skull cap, and is parted in the centre with a parting broadly cut. This elementary form of the barber's art is looked upon by the natives as "woman's work."

The features of the Andamanese are good and not coarse, like the negroes; they have fine noses and their lips are not too thick. In stature they are very short, only about 4 feet 6 inches or so.

Wednesday, 30*th*.—At dawn we went up a creek in the steam launch, which machine broke down frequently. Over brackish water were many *Vanda teres*, magnificent orchids with mauve flowers of great beauty, known in England chiefly through Lord Rothschild's collection, which is exhibited annually at the Temple Show. They grow very locally, and are all epiphytes; that is to say, that though they grow on trees, they are not in any way parasites, as they are nourished entirely by the air and the moisture of the atmosphere, and do not draw any subsistence from the tree. This applies to all orchids except to the few that are terrestrial. The only terrestrial flower—and this not an orchid—which I have seen in the Andamans, is a small star-shaped blossom, springing from a little twig with big leaves. The flower is sometimes blue and sometimes white, and is not unlike jasmine blossom.

My Myi, our Burman, is doing splendid work. He wades into the water, chops away at the vandas, gets covered with ants, and looks upon it all as *his* expedition. Seeing him makes me feel most deeply what a misfortune it is that in England the idea is so rife that because a man has committed a murder, or, under stress of circumstances not likely to recur, has forged a cheque or done some other illegal action, therefore he is fit for nothing but to be punished,

both in jail and even by public opinion after his detention is over. In some of the English jails the prisoners are, besides, made to work with instruments and machines so obsolete that, on leaving the prison, they have learnt nothing that can be of any use to them in the future, or which will act as a deterrent to the commission of further crimes by enabling them to make a reasonable living.

On arriving at a forest camp, I rode on a she-elephant, and then we returned, steaming through the blinding rain, which poured in streams off our hats and on to our knees and made us quite wet through. The Sikh guard offered me his coat, but he looked so piteous that I had to refuse it; after which he sat rolled up in it, not an inch of any part of him exposed.

In the afternoon I stayed on board with Mrs. Bonig, whilst Talbot and Mr. Bonig went trolling in the launch. Suddenly the sky became quite black, and the rain fell so heavily that we could not see an inch beyond us. Knowing the eccentricities of the launch, I became rather alarmed, and begged Mrs. Bonig, who can speak Hindustani, to order a boat to be manned and sent out in search of our party. This she did after some time, but the badly disciplined crew lowered the boat so slowly that nearly an hour passed before it was ready. Just as it was going off, the launch appeared. They had had a terrible time in her, she having broken down just when the storm began. They drifted about in the dark, and, to make any headway, were obliged to row with the cushions.

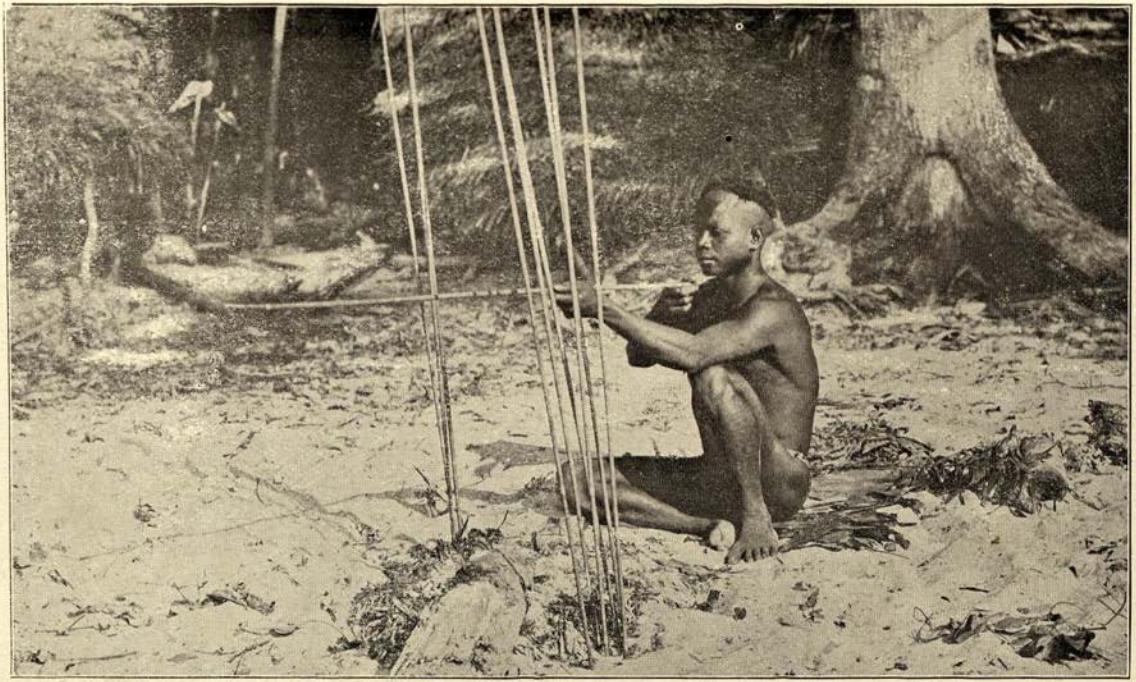
At last, after nearly an hour of this, they had managed to adjust the machinery, which enabled the launch slowly to return to the ship.

Thursday, 31*st*.—Last night My Myi was taken very ill. He was in agony, and sent up to Mr. Bonig for whisky, which Mrs. Bonig tried to prevent his having, as she thought he would get drunk and murder her. Notwithstanding this, he was eventtually given some—though the tenets of his faith, he being a Buddhist, strictly forbid the use of any intoxicants. To-day he is still very ill. We have had him put in the saloon below, which makes dressing awkward for us; but, when he is awake, he clambers up on deck, and then we clothe ourselves. I feed him up with soup and rice. We think he may have appendicitis.

We have had a loathsome day, steaming and tossing; even Shakespeare could not lift my mind above the discomfort, melancholy reflection that the finest philosophy and art have less power over one's mind than is exercised by a choppy sea!

"Sudden the worst turns the best to the brave," and we got into a magnificent harbour.[1] Tea plantations lay on one side; everywhere else was the jungle, and in it grew wonderful trees that are cut down and exported to Europe and America. The

[1] We heard afterwards that a terrible monsoon had swept over all the waters of the Andamans, and its increasing force might very probably have caused us to be shipwrecked had we not reached the harbour when we did.



ANDAMANESE ARROW-MAKER
(Photo by Maurice Portman)

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great *padouks* make marble wood and satin wood, and the *gurgan* will pave the streets of London and be stretched along the railroads of the world. The trees growing here so grandly will, not long hence, be laid under the feet of toiling horses and toiling men and women, slaves, nearly all of them, either in bondage through poverty, or else in thrall to their riches. Were the trees to foresee this doom, surely they would wither and die with horror at their approaching fate.

Friday, April 1st.—The day following our entry into the harbour we took a launch down the river, where, some years before, Jaruas had shot arrows at a passing white man's boat. We, however, saw no savages, but poor Mrs. Bonig saw hundreds, delineated by her fears. This was, it must be owned, partly due to our having told her, in honour of the first of April, that a Jarua had been seen that very morning to shoot an arrow into the river. This caused a total collapse on her part, and she lay huddled at the bottom of the boat, apparently putting no limit to the value of her life, and to the catastrophe it would be were she to be deprived of it.

We landed at a tea plantation and inspected the little bushes with their big leaves, which play so important a part in life at home. The owner of the plantation has been there for fifteen or twenty years, in the intense loneliness of this solitary place. He is utterly wearied of it, and is, besides, going blind, whilst his wife amuses herself in Paris

on the small income he makes out here—veritable blood money paid to her, which prevents his going home to consult a specialist on his case.

From that plantation to another one we went in a small trolley, made to hold two people. This conveyance was pulled by one convict and pushed by another, while both men ran with bare feet on the narrow metal lines; a really wonderful performance in the way of balance.

All plantation work is done by convicts, as the aborigines never give up their own methods of life to do any settled labour.

This cleared part of the island was superb, owing to the palms and bamboos standing out like individual gems along the road which cuts across the otherwise impenetrable jungle. So, through a perfect paradise, we gained the other side of the island, where we rejoined our steamer and sailed back to Port Blair.

We lived for days on our turtles, but I was mocked at and called the "uncareful housewife," because we ate, in soup, sometimes thick and sometimes clear, and in delicious chops, one whole turtle each day.

I came back laden with "puzzle fruit," which I had found on the river bank; a curious fruit with the seeds inside forming a circle. These, however, divide into many separate parts the moment one cuts the rind, and, as all the pieces are different sizes, it is really impossible to replace them in their natural position. Not being as devoid of mental

occupation as many of the best people in the centres of civilization must have been when they took up picture puzzles, we did not improve the shining hours by attempting to put the pieces together.

Of the orchids which we found during this pilgrimage were *Ærides*, *Vanda teres*, and *Phalænopsis*, besides cymbidiums and dendrobiums. Upon our return to Port Blair these plants were dried in the wind by putting them on long strings in our bungalow verandah, a shady place being necessary for them. This reduced us to being obliged to sit huddled in the warmest corner of the verandah, but the welfare of the orchids naturally took precedence of our own. After about a week we packed them in boxes with plenty of airholes, behind which a fine wire net was nailed to prevent cockroaches getting in and eating the bulbs. We sent these cases to the Curator of the Botanical Gardens in Rangoon, that he might sort the orchids and repack them. By packing, I mean simply laying the plants in the boxes. The *Phalænopsis*, in spite of careful tending by Edward, were quite dead by the time we reached our bungalow. These orchids have to be sent home in a totally different way from the others, as they are much more delicate. They are potted and put into small glass cases, called "wardian cases," and the damp which is contained in the plants, with the even temperature, keeps them alive when travelling. They are very difficult to grow when they do survive the homeward

journey, and few people succeed in getting their plants to flower freely, but in this way we have been really fortunate, as in our erstwhile tomato house in Lancashire we now have a few hundred plants, all of which flower luxuriantly.

CHAPTER XVI

NOTES ON THE ANDAMANESE

"I love these 'images of God cut in ebony.'"
CHARLES LAMB.

THE Andamanese have many varieties of arrows, some for fishing and others for pig-killing and bird-shooting, besides which beads, leaves, and skulls are almost their only possessions.

The skulls of their dead they dig up some time after the burial of the deceased, and these they travel about with and often wear as relics and charms. We were very depressed at being asked three or four pounds for one which we wished to purchase; and considered that the Andamanese vendor set too high a price upon his relative's head. By waiting, we managed finally to get one in exchange for a pair of khaki knickerbockers. The aborigines also make charms against diseases out of the bones of their relatives, which are disinterred and washed some months after their burial.

They have but an elementary mode of expression, which they eke out with gestures and contortions. As an instance of this I may quote that, when some of them once went to search in the Jarua country for an Englishman who had disappeared, they re-

turned suddenly, and, going straight to the Chief Commissioner, who was on the tennis court, they all lay on the ground, thus showing that death had laid low the Englishman, and then completed the pantomime by rolling his head out of a bag and placing it at the Chief's feet. The tennis party dispersed hurriedly that day.

They know of the Milky Way, and call it, I have read, the "Stairs of Angels." Luke told me that when they saw lights on uninhabited islands, they regarded them as being little sprites, with which supposition I am ready to agree, believing, as I do, in company with Paracelsus, the Andamanese and some others, in the existence of elementals or "nature spirits"—beings inferior to men in intelligence, having indeed only animal intellects and not being really spirits, "resembling men and women in their organization and form, and resembling spirits in the rapidity of their locomotion."[1] Of such are Ariel, Puck, and Titania of the poet's vision, and of such are the Undines of legend and the salamanders of the ancients.

Granting that beings of this kind do exist, where could they more happily assemble than on these far-off isles, where man and his activities do not pollute or disturb the elements they delight in—for they are properly children of the elements, and are the unadmitted realities which are now only allowed to figure in fairy tales and poems.

The Andamanese believe also in one named "Puluga," who seems to be good rather than evil,

[1] Paracelsus.

and who is the creator of all things ; him, however, they do not worship or pray to. In fact, they have no official or private forms of prayer, propitiation or adoration. Most of their ceremonies hinge about the burial of and mourning for the dead, who are thought to revisit and reinhabit the earth, incarnating sometimes in their descendants and sometimes in the bodies of birds and beasts. In fact, most of the flora and fauna of the isles is to aborigines the present garmenting of the wraiths of their ancestors.

There are certain old men who interpret the dreams of the imaginative, and who dabble in an elementary magic. To age they always pay a certain respect, though the rulers of the various tribes are chosen not for their years, but for their individual predominance in leadership and management. Luke, for instance, was inevitably a chief from his superior capacities and his wider learning.

The Andamanese are thought to be a survival of the most ancient of the families of mankind. Before the Malay Peninsula was the dwelling-place of those who to-day inhabit her, before the south-easternly part of Asia bore her present children, before the Philippines knew the natives who now make their home in these isles, all those countries mothered the Negrito people who now survive in the Andamans alone.

Strange little brothers, out of date in this century, black as though shadowed by the midnight of evolution, whilst on our faces shines its rising sun. Occultists, indeed, say that the Andamanese and the

bushmen of Australia and a few of the natives of Africa are of the third race—a bare remnant —there being, they calculate, seven races of which only five have as yet come into being; and we, of Europe, are of the fifth race, but the Chinese and many of the East Indians are of the fourth. The one tragedy that haunts the Andamanese is the quickly coming end of their ancient race, for the children born to them are very few. Little creatures with white pads to their hands and white soles to their feet, bearing here the marks of the ape-man, which stigma they lose as they grow up, they are treasured and loved, but they number few. In the small company under Luke there were only three or four Andamanese children.

The monuments that testify to the great age of this race are not sculptured temples, or palaces, or pillars, but mere kitchen middens, at the base of which are shells that the people threw away after having eaten the fish within. These shells have become fossils and are now the humble chronicles which testify to the age of this dying and still undeveloped race.

The Nicobars

LORD, thou sendest down rain upon the uncounted millions of the Forest, and givest the trees to drink exceedingly. We are here upon this isle a few handfuls of men, and how many myriads upon myriads of stalwart trees! Teach us the lesson of the trees. The sea around us, which this rain recruits, teems with a race of fish. Teach us, Lord, the meaning of the fishes. Let us see ourselves for what we are, one of the countless number of the clans of thy handiwork. When we would despair, let us remember that these also please and serve Thee.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

CHAPTER XVII

OF "NICOBARBARIANS"

"A man's children are not really sent, any more than the pictures upon his walls or the horses in his stables are sent."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

By very special privilege we were allowed to take My Myi with us to the Nicobars, he having quite recovered his usual health. Talbot and I, therefore, went on board with Edward and Lazarus and My Myi. Edward, during our whole journey, was engaged in developing photographs for us in dark rooms, which were so hot that large quantities of ice had to be used to set the plates, and then not always effectually. He usually did this at night.

Our ship, the *Elphinstone*, is a 600-tonner, and is the official Government steamer used for periodical visits to these dependencies. Every three weeks or so during the dry season, she goes down to the Nicobars, and an inspection is made of at least some of the islands. Justice is administered, and a few remedies are left for the sick. At one time the system of convict labour was carried out there as it now is in the Andamans, but the climate was so unhealthy that this was given up. The only advantage of keeping the Nicobars as protected

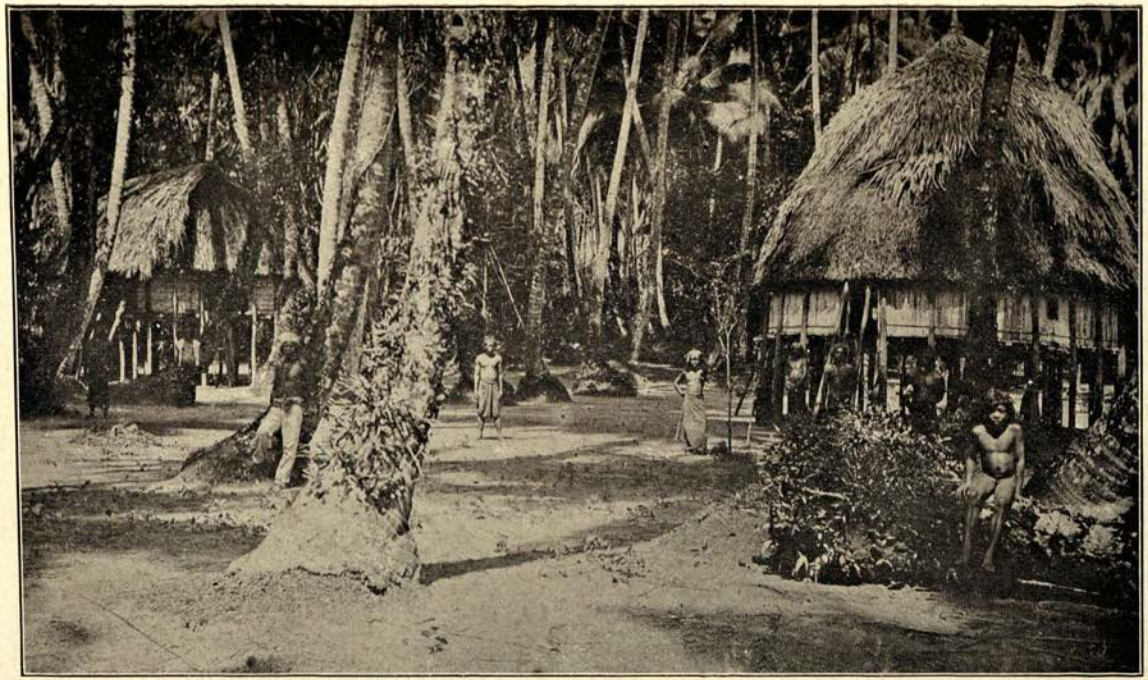
islands is that it prevents other European countries from using the wonderful harbours there, which, if in the possession of a foreign power, would, in the event of a war in Eastern waters, be a menace to whatever ships we had at Singapore.

The captain of the steamer and a few other officers, Mr. D'Oyly, the Inspector of the Nicobars, and two officers on leave from Burma were our companions on this journey. We had most comfortable cabins, with beds and chests of drawers, etc. On the ship we carried some under-officers, who kindly took Edward under their wing. An Indian crew and a few Sikhs completed our muster of human beings. Some goats for milk and fowls for food, as very little is procurable in the Nicobars, made up the live-stock.

Here I will again take up my diary, as in that form, I imagine, I can best relate our daily experiences as they impressed me at the time.

Saturday, 17th. At 8.30 we arrived at the main island, Car Nicobar, which means "The Great Nicobar," it being the largest island in the group.

The shore was fringed with tall cocoanut palms and *casuarina*—bread-fruit palms—beautiful, with their aerial roots rising out of the golden sand as though carved by a master hand. We walked in the lovely cocoanut groves, which were most restful after the thick undergrowth and rampant vegetation of the Andamans, and reached at last a mission station, where Nicobarese children are taught various things by a Hindu. The boys wore red bathing



NICOBARESE VILLAGE

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drawers, and the girls were draped in red too—a sort of Hindu dress. Is it really from a belated belief in the sad story of Adam and Eve, or why is it that the missionaries must at once clothe their converts? Why, because they have nasty ideas about nudity, must they implant them in the minds of their disciples? It is strange that, as men and beasts advance towards culture, they so often become more vicious and less moral. Many savages, Talbot tells me, judging from those he has known in Esquimaux land and in Siberia, are much more monogamous by nature than are white people; and, amongst white people, members of the most highly developed part of the community are by nature probably less monogamous than the simpler people. Amongst birds the same thing is found. Tame a duck or a pigeon and feed it artificially, and it becomes polygamous, whereas in nature it has but one mate. The hen, finally, is so depraved and incestuous after centuries of domestication that it lays unmaternal eggs daily through habit as it were.

The children were being instructed under a large thatched roof, the boys singing sorrowfully a hymn on the Resurrection. Then they all read in English, very haltingly, a small child's essay on the English lark, so useful to children in the Nicobars! Nothing practical is taught them, but only a religion far too ethical and high for them in their present state of development, though indeed they are nearer the primitive Christian ideal in many ways than we are, owing to their less complicated existences, more

provided for by Nature, so that they *can* grow "like the lilies of the field," though one must not infer from this that they are beautiful either psychically or physically.

Solomon, the Hindu missionary, got £80 a year for his instruction and for paltry meteorological observations. Compare with this the pay of a schoolmaster in England.

Leaving the amusing little mission school, where thirty children cost a hundred rupees a month—over £10 to teach them what they never learn—we went round the village, which was a revelation of cleanliness and prettiness. The houses are round and thatched, standing on stakes, with smaller houses of another shape for cooking. In the village is a large house for the birth of infants, and another for living in during six months after the event. The family join the mother there during the day. These separate huts are not found in the other isles, I am told, but only on Car Nicobar. During the time of pregnancy, both the expectant parents do no work, but visit about and feast with their friends; and, strangest custom of all, when the little yellow stranger arrives, the father as well as the mother goes to bed. This is not the fashion in Car Nicobar, where the mothers only use the huts specially provided for them at those times, but in the other Nicobar Islands this paternal lying-in is *de rigueur*, and sometimes lasts as long as six months, but the period of rest depends entirely upon the medicine man. This "couvade" is, of course, existent in other parts of the globe also,

and has been observed both in ancient and modern times. Marco Polo mentioned it, and other travellers have traced it amongst the Siamese, the Dyaks of Borneo, and many aboriginal tribes of North and South America. Red Indians of certain parts do it to prove that they own the child as being theirs, but they only trouble thus to certify to its legitimacy if it be a boy. The ancient Minautses of South China have the same custom, and strangest of all, until quite recently, the Basque and Gascon fathers used to receive attentions which, in the course of nature, should have been bestowed upon the mother—in fact the last cases have only just died out among them. Larousse's *Dictionary* says that "couvade" exists in the Island of Marken (Zuyder Zee) in the Baltic provinces of Russia, among various tribes of British India, and above all in America. In European and North American countries it usually lasts one moon, during which time the man alone rests, but the woman toils as usual, thus departing from the Nicobarese convention, which obliges both parents to rest. Strange indeed it is that so fantastic a tradition should be so widespread throughout the world and the ages!

Several of the houses in the village had large crosses outside them, showing that they were Christian dwellings. There is also a Christian church. The women were too shy to appear before us, but I saw one or two of them in their huts. They are absolutely different from the Andamanese, of course, being brown instead of

black, and more like Malays in feature. They have lank, black hair, and claim, probably correctly, to have come from Pegu on the coast of Tenasserim.

The people eat dogs and pigs, which latter they castrate. Sows they do not eat. Both men and animals live on cocoanuts and cocoanut water, never drinking fresh water. Cocoanut palms are the only form of private property. Pigs belong to the village, and are eaten at the great feasts, the chief of which, the "Memorial Feast," consists of unearthing a dead and buried member of the community, whose skeleton is then elaborately cleaned, and is afterwards reinterred in a common ground set apart for the purpose. We saw one of these "ossuaries," where the places of the dead were marked by upright piles of wood, and by various rubbish, such as rags and odds and ends. Silver "ferry-money" is buried with the corpse and again with the skeleton. The bodies are considered likely to be carried off by spirits, so they are staked into the ground in a peculiar way, and are adjured to remain there until the "Feast of the Memorial."

The natives, I hear, bathe themselves in cocoanut water, and hate drinking milk. On Car Nicobar they think that the cocoanut grew originally from the head of a man who was decapitated for producing water out of his elbow in a miraculous way. The people never tasted the cocoanut water, however, till a dying man, on whom they tried it, revived suddenly, "since when," as the famous advertisement says, "they have used no other."

The houses of all are open day and night and the



A Burial-ground
(Photo by H. Man)

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Nicobarese wander about and look on each house in the village as a home. There are some little shops kept by Hindus and Chinese. These are run for the purpose of selling grog, and also contain bits of cloth, string, tackle, etc. The goods are purchased with large numbers of cocoanuts given in exchange, wherefrom the dealers make copra.

Each village has its headman, and here at Car Nicobar is one too grotesque for description, wearing European clothes of every kind, a top hat and tennis shoes, a dress coat, knickerbockers and a blue waistcoat. He speaks a little English. We tried to photograph him with some other men, but it turned out a failure. The others were wearing about two inches of cotton binding, attached to a narrow strip of red cotton, which goes round the waist and falls into two ends behind. On their heads they wear a circle of dried palm leaf which terminates in two thick points: these represent the two ears of a dog, the red cotton strips standing for the tail of a canine friend. The origin of this strange custom is that the people believe that they are the descendants of a man who, with his dog, landed on the then uninhabited island of Car Nicobar.

The sunset of our first day in the Nicobars was lovely, and when it was dark we went out in a boat —three of us and Mr. D'Oyly, who knows all the natives, and whom they call "Dolly." From this boat, Talbot got on to one and I on to another of the native canoes, which were each paddled by three boys and had outriggers of bamboo after the catamaran fashion. In the prow of each canoe stood a

native, holding a torch made of the dried leaves of the cocoanut palm, the natural oil of which makes them suitable for burning. In his other hand he held a long bamboo, headed with many sharp barbs, and, as he saw a fish, he flung the torch to the nearest boy and stabbed his prey in the water. Our success was poor, however; Talbot's men got four small fishes, but from the boat manned with Christian natives, in which I was, they were unable to procure any. (The boys had shed their bathing drawers, of course.) Very beautiful were the dark waters silvered with moonlight, wherein slept that mighty monster the *cachalot.* The warm, balmy air and the boats, with the bronze-like, upright fishers standing in the bows, their flaming torches sweeping the waters, were movingly picturesque.

As I watched these cocoanut torches, they induced the thought that the cocoanut must be a god who loves the East, and who has taken to himself the form of a palm, and is always the friend and helper of the Eastern people. He has invented quite a hundred ways in which to assist them, of which I can enumerate but a few. He becomes productive after eight years of growth, and, yielding fruit which is gathered four or five times each year, he is bountiful for nearly eighty years. He grows at their doors with needle and thread, and has food and drink as his gifts. In these islands he is their bread and their water. He is transmuted into the hedge which fences in their home, and with his leaves their dwelling is thatched, having first been built of his body. He has ointment for them when they are



GROUP OF NATIVES OF CAR NICOBAR

Shewing headman in centre and also the canine head-dress.

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footsore, and sleep when they are tired, for from his roots is produced a slumberous draught. He gives them the refreshing waters of the nut, and supplies also spirituous drink when they feast. He has sugar for the mother and the children, and the husk of the ripened nut he gives to the women for fuel. The shell of the nut is used for cups and ladles and bowls, and part of it also serves to scrub and polish the floor of the hut. The child and the man depend on him for home and shelter, and he clothes them in garments of fibre. The baby is cradled by him, and when the child, as an old man, returns to the silence whence he came, the cocoanut palm which has succoured him on land and on water, and helped him at almost every hour of his life, gives for him the oil which lights the flame that burns over his grave. The oil is consumed in the final sacrifice made for the man who, forsaken of all others, is still served by the god in the palm.

These "Nicobarbarians," as we named them, are very interesting and unique in one way, which I have not yet touched upon. They, only perhaps of all the children of the ape, provide themselves neither with weapons of offence nor of defence, indeed their fish spears are their only instruments of pain. This fact alone would make them peculiar, for I can hear of no other race that is absolutely weaponless. They should certainly be invited to the Hague Conference as an example to their betters.

They have no written language, no knots or corded "quipus" like the Peruvians, but their

language is analytical and highly developed, and that of the Shom Pen is as advanced as the language of the trading inhabitants of Car Nicobar. The Shom Pens live in the interior and do not frequent the villages, the Nicobarese inhabitants which say that they live in trees, but whether they have platforms in the branches which have given rise to this assertion, I do not know. A sort of fear is connected with them, possibly as being a part of the unknown, as they do not seem to justify the terror they inspire by any acts of violence.

The Nicobarese have a charming way of expressing distances by habitual actions. Thus, a "cocoanut drink" would denote about a two-miles journey in a canoe, as not much farther would they go without resorting to their faithful fruit. An hour is a "stage of the sun," a few moments a "holding-in of the breath," a "chew of the dried quid" is about a quarter of an hour, or, if denoting distance, a mile on land.

Betel-chewing is so prevalent that the mouths of the people are distended and unsightly with it, for the accumulated masses of betel nut that stain their teeth absolutely enlarge their lips.

These people can make fire by rubbing a tinder, and, when they speak of a "bundle of firewood" as denoting time, they would signify a period of about three hours, as this is as long as it would take to burn.

Sunday, 18th.—At 4.30 in the morning, when the air had a transitory coolness and the stars were

giving way to the pale grey light of the early dawn, we weighed our anchor and sailed for Nancowrie Harbour, which we reached at three o'clock in the afternoon. The entrance to the harbour was quite beautiful as we passed creek after creek, all with high banks and rocks jutting out, covered with creepers and palms. The harbour itself is one of the finest in the world, and, as I said before, it is on account of it that we keep the Nicobars, for, were there fighting in the East, the whole of a hostile fleet could shelter there, and destroy the British ironclads. During the Russo-Japanese War, some Russian ships lay there for some days.

It may not come amiss to give now a brief history of these islands.

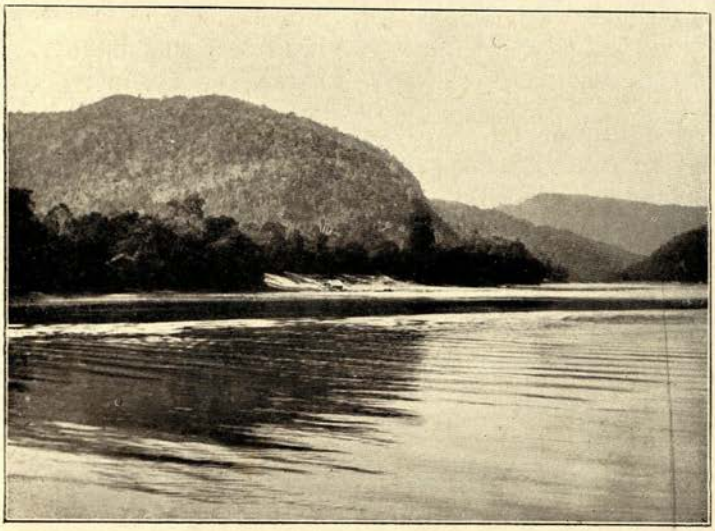
From 1768 to 1787 there was a Moravian Mission in Nancowrie. These missionaries do not come, as might be thought, from Moravia, but belong to a small body of Protestants, who have formed themselves into a community in order to practise the Christian religion with Apostolic simplicity. They are found all over Europe, and outdo in missionary zeal all other Christian Churches. Twenty-five of these brethren settled in Nancowrie in a most unhealthy, low-lying spot, and twenty-four of them died there. To-day a rosary is sometimes seen round a native's neck, and that is about all that witnesses to the efforts of these unfortunate men. Then, between 1831 and 1837, a Dutch Mission under Pasteur settled down and worked amongst the natives. Later on the Danes had a weak and transitory hold on the people, but from

1837 to 1869 they were independent of Europeans and spent three years in piracy and wrecking. In 1869 the Indian Government annexed the isles with the consent of the Danish King. From 1869 to 1888 a penal settlement was established at Nancowrie, but abandoned on account of fever.

We saw the remains of a garden, over which Mr. Man had taken much trouble when living here as head of the convict settlement. Wonderful palms had been sent to him from the jungle, and, as these were growing singly, we were much better able to appreciate their individual beauty than if they had been crowded together with a hundred thousand of others in the forest.

Nancowrie has great highlands and beautiful grassy lowlands. We climbed up to a hill-top where there was a most lovely view, with green ridges and water and stretches of pasture, very refreshing to the eye after the usual panorama of the jungle.

On the summit of this hill is a pathetic grave, where lies De Roepstrop, a former official in the settlement, who happened to be there alone with his wife at one period of his service. He found fault with a non-commissioned officer in charge of the Madras Infantry guard, who had been guilty of some delinquency. The Sepoy brooded over the matter, and shut himself up in his room, which overlooked the pathway up the hill, leading to De Roepstrop's bungalow. That evening De Roepstrop and his wife rode up under the window of the unhappy man, who, leaning



VIEW IN ANDAMANS



VIEW IN THE NICOBARS
The Harbour of Nancowrie

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out, shot down on them and killed De Roepstrop, striking him in the heart. The murderer, appalled at his deed and its consequences, killed himself a few minutes afterwards. De Roepstrop's wife was thus suddenly widowed, and was now the only white person in these islands; and here she was obliged to remain until the news of the tragedy had been slowly borne to Port Blair by a native sailing ship. Another officer was immediately dispatched to the Nicobars to take charge of the settlement and to have Mrs. De Roepstrop brought safely back. The poor woman conceived such a horror of the Madras Sepoys that, during the terrible time of her lonely waiting on the island, she would not allow them to approach her house and had convicts to guard her. The simple stone tells nothing of the tragedy, but, except for the name and date, bears only the valiant avowal that "God is Love."

We left two officers here who wished to get a buffalo, the only wild animal in all the isles which attracts the hunter's attention. They are large creatures with fine heads, and are the product of the splendid cattle, brought here by the missionaries, which have since run wild upon the islands. Talbot was not tempted to pursue, being on orchids bent, of which plants so far we had found none.

In the evening, we crossed over to the opposite shore, where the drunken old headman met us and begged for clothes. He told "Dolly" that the natives were "having Christmas," which we discovered meant that they were preparing for a feast and were very drunk. This phrase and an old

ruined well were the only traces of the painful years of heroic work dedicated by many missionaries in these islands. It seemed curious to find that the words "keeping Christmas" were synonymous with getting drunk even out here.

The feast that was in preparation was the unearthing of the dead, to which I have already referred. Every year or so this occurs and is the occasion of a great celebration, when enormous numbers of pigs are eaten and large quantities of illicit spirituous liquors are consumed.[1] The natives always manage to procure these alcoholic beverages in spite of the British embargo upon such trading. The Nicobarese also decorate their huts for these occasions. I went into one of them, ascending a ladder which stood against it, and up which a dog ran in a wonderful way in front of me. The dwelling was immaculately clean, as are most of them, and the floor was polished like a ballroom parquet. In the corner were the long palm broom and the wooden prong used for cleaning. Facing the entrance, and tied to a wooden stand, were a quantity of cotton banners, and, on the stand, hung dozens of spoons. The general effect was extraordinary, as may easily be imagined, and somehow it was very German. Barter, of course, is the only mode of sale amongst the natives. We gave the headman queer clothes in exchange for the promise of a

[1] Here is a second example of asking a higher standard of conduct from natives than from ourselves, for we do not allow them to get drunk or even to drink alcoholic preparations.



VILLAGE SHEWING SCARE-DEVILS BLOWING IN THE WIND

(Photo by H. Man)

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skull, and of a rosary should one be found. I got rid of a pair of my khaki trousers (apparently the staple article of exchange for a human skull) and some cotton blouses; and the headman soon appeared in a weird combination of the two.

I took some snapshots of two men who were "delicate"—at least they were just in for a "couvade," and looked rather bored at their approaching confinement.

The people here clothe themselves considerably more than on Car Nicobar. We saw some fine-looking men, much resembling North American Indians. The village, with its depth of cocoanut palms behind it, is quite lovely, and on the sea-shore stands its guardian, the tall scare-devil. Such an one is seen outside every Nicobarese village, and consists generally of a long bamboo with strips of palm and bunting on the top; rude wooden figures of various sizes, mostly denoting men, though some are carved like birds, are also to be seen. These are found both inside and outside the houses, and we got several in exchange for our barter. To the Nicobarese the Devil is the source of many things, and, rationally perhaps, these natives count diseases, crimes, and misfortunes as products of the Evil One. This belief results in curious actions. In the treatment of disease, for instance, the sufferer is not disliked in any way nor cruelly treated, but his betterment in health is undertaken by the "medicine man," who exorcises him and treats him entirely by magic cures without administering medicine,

in this way resembling somewhat the Christian Scientists.

The malefactor fares worse, though now, owing to the periodical visit of the Government steamer, the people realize that the British prefer to take away their criminals, in fact to make collections of them in places specially adapted for the purpose, for thus our penal system must appear to them. They therefore keep their evil-doers for the Superintendent to judge, and to transport if necessary. The British do not apply the usual penal code in the Nicobars, but remove the offender entirely for his own sake, for were he to be left in the islands his compatriots would seize him, and, as their tenets forbid the shedding of blood, they would break his arms and legs and put him in a boat, which they would then set adrift. The breaking of his bones is not done through any wanton cruelty, but solely to prevent his being able-bodied enough to return and haunt them after his death. They seldom rid themselves of a man in this way unless by continual theft he becomes impossible to a community which shares all its goods, and holds private property only in cocoanuts. The pigs are equally divided amongst the people at their feasts, so that if a man steals another person's portion he naturally becomes hated.

They are weighing the anchor, so I must turn in, for these waters are slightly tiresome to so bad a sailor as myself.



HUTS AT HIGH-TIDE

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Trinkut, Monday, 19th.—The hills here are 1400 feet high, but, alas, there are no orchids. The coral is quite beautiful, and there are great rocks of it. I fell on some when on shore, and cut my hand; it is supposed to be poisonous. It looks mauve under the water, and lies there like great amethysts. We went on shore to try and find a megapod's nest, but only managed to shoot the bird, which was disappointing for us; for the megapod is peculiar to the Nicobars, and is a most interesting creature. It is the size of a small chicken, with brown feathers and long feet, and its chief characteristics are the enormous nests it builds on the ground and the big eggs it lays, which are as large as ducks' eggs—quite out of proportion, when one takes its size into account. It does not hatch these out, but allows them to incubate on the mounds of dry leaves and sticks which it erects. It is known in Australia, but in few other parts. The megapod tastes like guinea-fowl, but its flesh is rather coarser, and in the East one has not time to let meat get tender, as it goes bad before it is well hung.

The pigeons here are quite lovely; they are a bright parrot green, and, if it were not for their shape, one would think they were paraquets. There are others also, which have, as it were, a cape of wonderful enamel-like green feathers, iridescent and beautiful.

The Nicobarese are very clever at picking up, in a sort of patois way, a few sentences in many languages—such as Hindu, Chinese and English. They

have glimmerings too of the finer senses: for instance, they like the scent of fragrant leaves. In Chowra, where, I am sorry to say, we are not going, and which is the sacred place—the Athens of their Isles—they make pottery, and have there the monopoly of its manufacture. It is crude, I believe, but it is the dawning of an art and of an idea.

Chowra must be a terrible place of suffering, for in three square miles there are five hundred and twenty-two people afflicted with elephantiasis, or about twenty per cent of the population. It is a disease which is communicated by mosquitoes, and begins by a swelling, which increases and spreads down to the feet and takes years to kill the victim of its attack.

One is apt to comfort oneself for the sufferings of the coloured races by declaring that, like animals, they do not feel as much as we do, which indeed is undoubtedly the case, and is borne out by the experiments of Lombroso and others. His method, when investigating the degree of sensibility of any person, was to place a drawing compass on that person's hand, and gauge the delicacy of his sensitiveness by the accuracy of his estimate as to whether one or two points were pricking him. He deduced from this that women are less perceptive of pain than men. Indeed, they usually only note the duality of the pricks when the points are at a distance of, roughly, a quarter of an inch, whereas men, in spite of their tougher hands, can, being



TWO "MAFAI" ARE HERE SHOWN—

That is novitiates who are qualifying for the practice of medicine and magic. They are compelled to wear wire round their arms and knees and are therefore obliged to be carried.

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blindfolded, sense the points as single or double at a lesser distance apart. The Nicobarese feel them correctly at about half an inch apart. Whether this method really would apply to all the internal sensations, or only to cutaneous ones, I cannot say.

Tuesday afternoon.—To-day we went to look for orchids, starting early and taking a boat up a creek in the mangrove swamps. After rowing for about half an hour, we had to cut our way from the boat through the dark, weird-looking jungle, where the branches met across the water. We were probably the first people ever to penetrate up this creek, and our intrusion seemed to be resented by the thorny palms that hung over the brackish water and tore us as we pushed our way past. Bread-fruit trees and tree palms, with tall column-like stems and a crown of foliage, and a dense mass of tropical verdure greeted us, but of orchids we found singularly few, only two *cymbidiums* in fact, in spite of Talbot and the Burmese convict penetrating into the jungle whilst the rest of the party waited in the boat.

My Myi is very happy in his state of comparative freedom. It means a great deal to his independent national character to have this change of scene and new method of living and working.

Tuesday evening.—We steamed back to Trinkut to pick up the two officers whom we had left at

Nancowrie. They had each got a buffalo, the heads of which had to be hung over the side of the ship for the rest of the journey, and woe to us if we got a following wind! although they had been buried for several days and well cleaned. The heads were very fine.

In the afternoon we went to the Court House, and first photographed the criminal we had taken away from Nancowrie, because D'Oyly feared that the natives would devil-kill him, as he had robbed them. His trial will be concluded at Nancowrie to-morrow. The prisoner looked a sullen, unhappy creature. Afterwards we photographed groups of "Nicobarbarians," who were all dressed in Chinese, Hindu and European odds and ends; but we made them take most of them off and just pose in what they usually wear. The men here, like those in Nancowrie, all have much more efficient clothing than they do in Car Nicobar.

Afterwards a poor old woman dying of consumption was taken to the Court House, where D'Oyly gave her medicine to relieve her, and later on a man was brought there, who weeks before had been bitten by a snake. The dirt and neglect caused the wound to get very bad, and he developed a cyst and every sort of complication. He agreed to allow us to take him to the hospital in the Andamans, which was plucky of him, considering how absolutely unknown to him everything will be. He will, we fear, lose his leg.

Then came the amusing part of the afternoon,

what I called D'Oyly's mothers' meeting, though all of us, being true Britons, pretended to each other not to know what was happening. A few of the party perhaps did not know. Women, young and old, came in canoes, summoned by Mr. D'Oyly from the village opposite ; and many also came from that part of the island where the Court House is situated. They assembled in the open space beside the water, and all sat on the grass in long lines of ugliness. They sit cross-legged, and do not squat on their calves as do the Burmese and many of the Hindus.

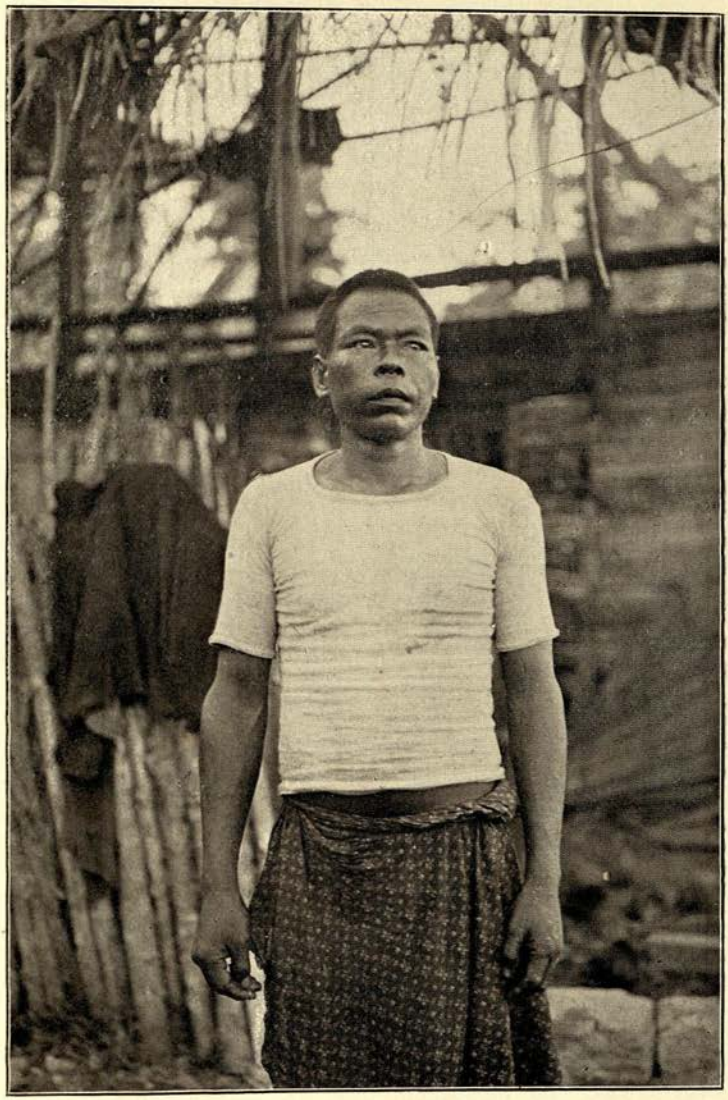
The cause of this gathering was that the traders had made a formal protest to Mr. D'Oyly against the decrease of the population ; soon, they declared, there would not be enough people on the Nicobars to make it worth while to trade there, and the cause lay in the natives themselves. The "medicine man" gave them a herb to apply externally, and possibly something to take internally, and the effect of this, the only medicine I ever heard of his administering, was to lay the women up for from four to six months, often causing the death of the would-not-be mother. It seems extraordinary, in a community where child-birth is easy and children cost nothing to produce or bring up, that such very violent preventatives—or, should I say, cures—are used ; and I think that this must be owing to "couvade," and that the father forbids the unfortunate wife often to repeat the experiment which lays him up for so long.

According to the last census the population of the whole island is neither increasing nor decreasing, three being the average number of children. Mr. D'Oyly threatened with imprisonment any family in which the women should die of this treatment —a very efficient if somewhat original method of prevention. He also held out sundry punishments to any of the women who might be reported as having adopted this principle.

As in England, we attribute our afflictions, diseases, and offspring to an external Providence, so the Nicobarese apparently fancy that they originate from a supernatural source of evil. They, however, use methods of prevention for the last-named, whereas we do but apply them to the former. *Autres pays, autres mœurs!*

We saw one man who had a head like the top of a sugar-cone, the only example we met of the effects of the deformation of the head which is practised here, as it was amongst the Peruvians and is amongst the Hindus to this day. In India this deformation makes the man imbecile, and he is considered to be consecrated to Sha Juju, and is her "mouse," being fed by the faithful who love that goddess, and making his abiding dwelling at her shrine. Here it seems to be a curious and quite meaningless custom.

Talbot and I are making a queer little collection of scare-devils and brooms, etc., but we cannot get the rosary or the skull, which we are so anxious to have.



THE DEVIL-THIEF

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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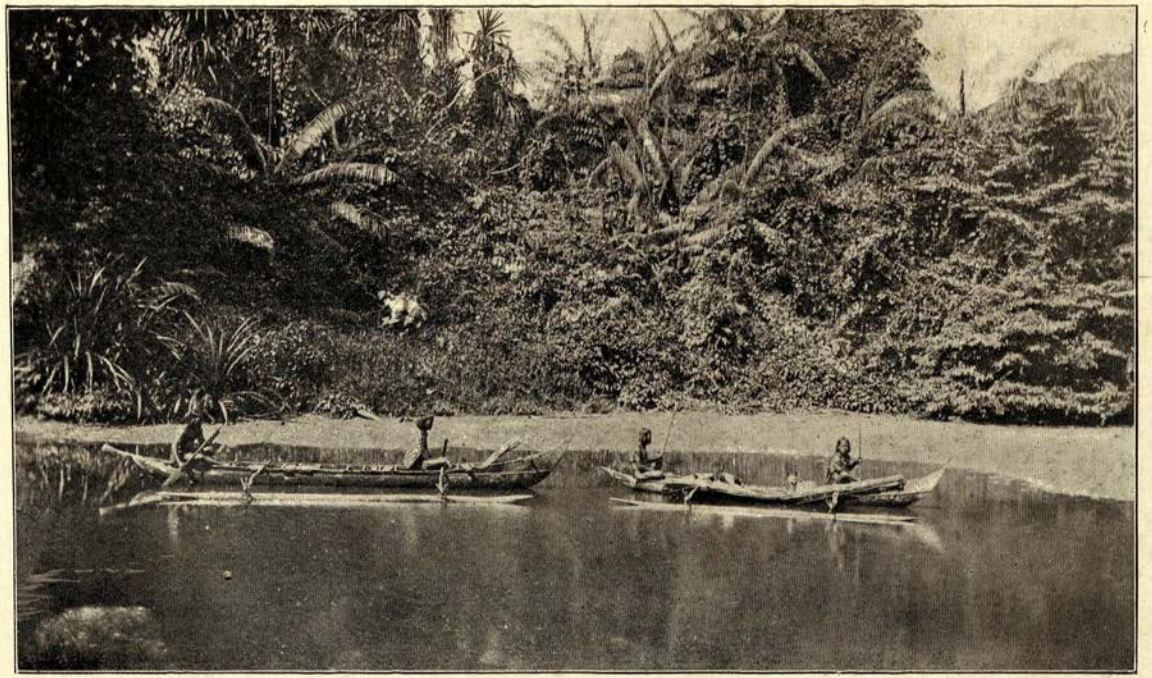
Wednesday.—Last night many of the natives came on board and danced: all of them were men. They join hands and circle round like children playing "Here we go round the mulberry bush"; then suddenly they go quicker, stamping and swaying to their singing, which, the Explorer says, is very like that of the Arabs. It consists of from ten to twelve tones, and is, to me, most weirdly pleasing. They laughed a great deal too, and got quite excited.

To-day we returned to Nancowrie, where the trial of the devil-thief was to be concluded. Talbot went to this trial. He was amused to see that the witnesses always looked up to the ceiling before sitting down on the floor, which habit, we are told, is due to their expecting that a cocoanut may drop on their heads. Talbot asked the thief, through D'Oyly, what he did with the large quantities of meat which he had taken and which he could not eat. "Did you give them to your wife?" he queried. "No, I threw away all I could not eat," answered the man.

. . . . . .

A few days later we reached Port Blair, and, after saying good-bye to Colonel and Mrs. Browning, to whom our heartfelt gratitude was due for many kindnesses, we went on board the *Maharajah* and sailed back to Rangoon, starting on Saturday and reaching it on Monday night.

We determined now to go down the Mergui Archipelago, which is the southern part of Burma, hoping to get some orchids other than those we had so far gathered.



River Craft
(*Photo by H. Man*)

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The Mergui Archipelago

THE ORCHIS

I HAVE found an orchis ;
  "What of that?" you say.
'Tis a proof that miracles
  Happen every day.

Thus I grasp perfection,
  Hold it in my hand,
Touch what has no flaw at all ;
  Don't you understand?

Could I find my nature,
  Know the calm of this,
I should solve the hidden truths,
  Grow in golden bliss.

Were I but as faultless
  As this child of sod,
I should reign arch-hierophant
  O'er the Saints of God.

V. T. C.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOULMEIN AND BEYOND

"Flowers are the hieroglyphics whereby Nature tells us how much she cares for us."—GOETHE.

To avoid the extremely expensive and disagreeable hotel in Rangoon, Talbot and I obtained the kind permission of the captain of the *Maharajah* to sleep on board when in port. Our last dinner on the steamer was marked by an amusing incident, for, on the menu, the Hindu cook had written as the nomenclature of the pudding, "General Satisfaction." Some present guessed that this must signify plum-pudding or mince-pies, but I rather brilliantly suggested "Tipsy Cake," and such it proved to be.

The night on board ship in port was extremely hot, a hundred and two degrees, I think.

Next morning we went aboard the steamer *Kohinoor*, a ship belonging to the Asiatic Company. We were the only passengers. Sailing at nine, we drifted down the river, which was not beautiful, and came to anchor again at two o'clock, owing to the tide at the bar. The relief of sailing

once more was very great, as when we were anchored we got no breeze whatever.

On reaching Moulmein, the first port at which we landed, we found a fairly large town and went off to look at some lodgings which had been recommended to us. The sight of them disgusted us, however, as they were dirty and expensive, being kept by a Eurasian woman. We therefore sought the Deputy Commissioner, to whom we had a letter, and he recommended the Dak Bungalow, or rest house, to which we resorted. The coolest room had been taken by a commercial traveller, but we got a larger one on the other side. Sending out for tinned salmon and fresh eggs, we fed our vile bodies, and then sat on the verandah and gasped, for the heat of Moulmein was very great, about ninety-nine degrees in the shade, and also damp, which always intensifies the feeling of heat. Talbot and I never had punkahs, either by day or night, as the constant movement got on our nerves, and the relief afforded by them is rather temporary. We used to go out whenever we had anything to do, as well at midday as in the evening, and I consider that this is the best plan for people not *living* in the tropics, as it is much pleasanter to be dripping and panting and interested and out, than bored and supine on a bed in a dark rest-house bedroom. The mosquitoes at night were quite fiendish, buzzing and biting in spite of the net, which was not guiltless of holes.

The chief traffic in Moulmein seemed to consist of a "Black Maria," that drove to and fro in front

of the bungalow verandah, where we sat and played draughts, the name of which game was perhaps its chief attraction.

We went to call upon a Mr. Murray, whom we did not find. We had heard that he could put us on the track of orchids, for which the neighbourhood of Moulmein is well known. Some low trader, we were told, had lately gone into the jungle near Moulmein and taken hundreds of orchids, after which he gathered together and burnt as many others of the same species as he could find, so that people coming after him might not be able to collect any. In a large illustrated book, which we had with us, called *The Orchid Album*, many rare dendrobiums and cymbediums were marked as natives of Moulmein. Having had the address given us by Colonel Browning of a Burmese trader of the name of Moung Win Tien, we sent for him.

I, in the meantime, walked up to the top of a small hill above Moulmein, and wandered about the pagodas, hearing the breeze playing with the bells.[1] These pagodas were very simple erections, generally without any figure within, and had been built that the people who had them erected might "acquire merit."

The river and the creeks, the rocky hills and the pagodas of the town of Moulmein, lying embowered in trees blazing with flowers, made a very lovely view. The native part of the town was also most

[1] These bells do not call to worship as do ours in Europe, but are thought to attract spirits, who will mark the faithful at their devotions and be glad because of their adoration.

attractive, with orchids growing in the verandahs, as geraniums would grow in an English cottage window. Many naked children played and laughed in the roads, whilst their parents looked on, clothed in coloured silks.

By this time I had lost all traces of being a white woman, the sun having completely bronzed me, so that to have mistaken me for a Eurasian would have been flattering. Like Arctic rabbits or sand birds, I had taken on the colour of my surroundings. Edward, on the other hand, who, like us, was in the open at all hours, had, alas, the complexion of a fresh Devonshire lassie, just kissed by the sun. He might hurry or work or travel, by land or by water, but it never made him appear hot, or red, or sunburnt. I told him to send a water-colour of his face to some company for the promotion of complexions, as I am sure they would have paid him large sums for his portrait as advertising their cold cream or pale powders, especially had I sent mine too, as the counterfeit presentment of the unwise traveller, who did *not* use so-and-so's patent messes. Edward's complexion, being a continual thorn in my flesh, I have mentioned it here as a very real trouble to me. It is true that we had provided him with a sun-hat, a luxury which the Explorer and I never went in for, in spite of the frenzied advice of all our acquaintances, who unceasingly prophesied sunstroke. Talbot had, however, done all his exploring in Africa hatted only with a grey felt.

Win Tien came on the day of our arrival, after dinner. He crouched at our feet in the verandah,

he and his young nephew, and spoke to us in charming English. We showed him the pictures of the orchids we wished him to produce, and he promised to send a native into the forest for them, but, as the wet season was very imminent, he considered he would be able to get better specimens for us after the torrential rains had ended.

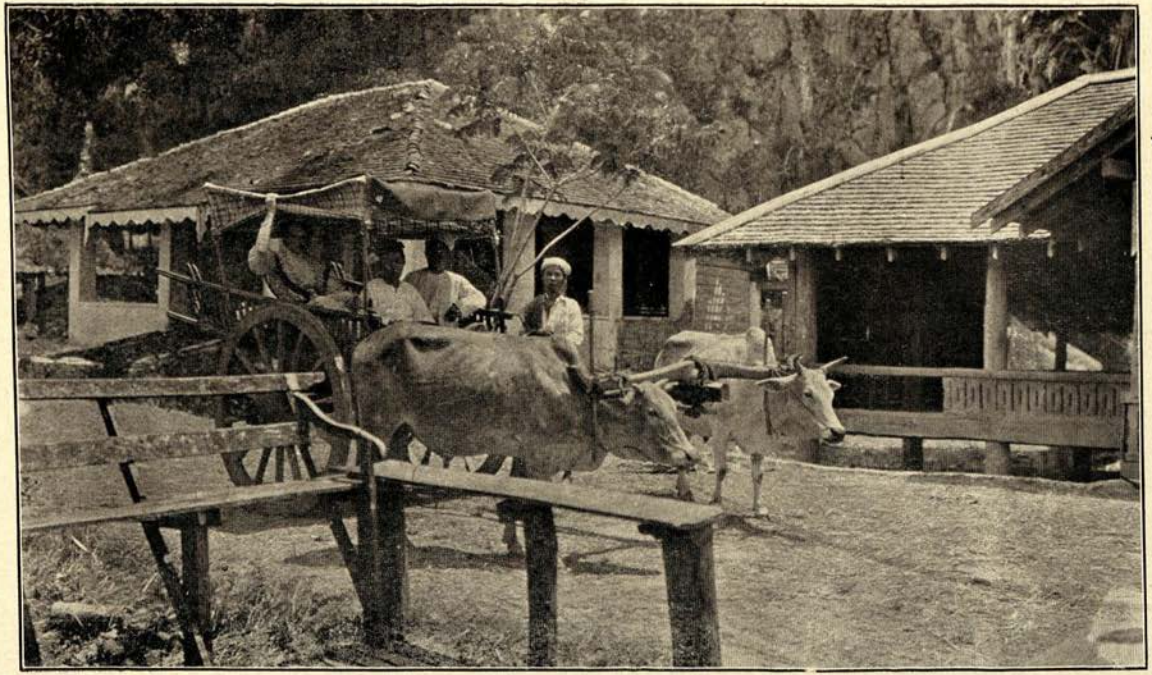
The following day we went with him across the river to see the Farm Caves. Taking the faithful Edward, and being also accompanied by Win Tien's wife, Ma The Mhon, and her nephew, we took tickets on a ferry in a Hindu part of the town, where natives had stalls of sacred pictures, sweets, and odds-and-ends. I bought a very small and extraordinarily ugly hat, such as a Hindu babe a few months old would wear. It was like a bowler with a brim, but made of straw, with two coloured cock feathers in it and a border of red paper round it. I destined it to be the worst punishment for my baby number two, a girl, Aurea by name—called after an orchid on whose budding day she was born. No daughter of mine would ever be naughty twice, if, at the first outbreak, she had to go into the town wearing this hat; the agonies of Lady Godiva would be as nothing to the pain and shame of such a covering. It will literally be "capital punishment."

Having crossed in the ferry, we got into a bullock cart, and started off to see the sacred caves. Talbot walked at a great pace, Win Tien politely trying to do the same; but, soon falling into the rear, he came on with Edward, and some-

times lapsed into the cart. Some Hindus, whom we had brought in a second waggon to light up the caves for us, had to walk when Edward drove so as not to overburden the bullocks. This they did with feelings of dismay.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Win Tien, unlike her husband, spoke no English, so we could not converse as we journeyed together in our cart. Suddenly, without any apparent cause, she unwound her long, black hair, and, to my intense surprise, took off a detachable coil, which, with the utmost sang-froid, she pinned on again. Our slow and shaky cart, in which we lay on cushions, arrived at last at some rocky hills, and we drew up and sought the shelter of a small space, over which a roof was supported on pillars. Here we unpacked our delicacies. Win Tien's wife undid hers, and fed the nephew and looked after the Hindus, sitting in another roofed-in square at some distance from ours. We could not persuade her to join us, but Win Tien came and ate tinned salmon and meat in his fingers (which he afterwards scrupulously washed), for the Burmese do eat meat, though they may not, of course, kill it nor, I think, buy it, but as a gift it is acceptable.

After having had lunch, we went into the sacred caves. Practically all caves in the East are turned into sacred places; they seem adapted by nature for shrines. Many statues of Buddha were there, recumbent most of them and larger than life-size; some portrayed him sitting cross-legged and some were upright. A few showed him as prince in his



THE BULLOCK CART WITH MR. AND MRS. WIN TIEN AND THE AUTHORESS

(Photo by Edward)

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royal robe with his young face, and others represented him sterner and older in the austere simplicity of his yellow priestly garment. There was an impressive sincerity of worship in these figures; otherwise neither they nor the caves were, strictly speaking, beautiful.

We afterwards walked round to another entrance of the caves. The heat was great, I remember, and when we had got up the hillside to the opening it was good to plunge into the shade and coolness of this place where the sun never penetrated. Our Hindus ran about with torches, and Win Tien sat and gasped with admiration, but I laughed consumedly. It was so exactly like a scene in a Drury Lane melodrama, with the rocks that looked like painted prominences, the excited Hindus, the ecstatic Burman, Edward, large-eyed and entranced, and a strong smell of bats prevailing throughout, for hundreds of these creatures chirped and twittered, and flew about disturbed by the light. It seemed so incongruous to go to Burma and find Drury Lane, though without Drury Lane I should never have got to Burma, I suppose (but this is going back to the sinister origin of my family).[1]

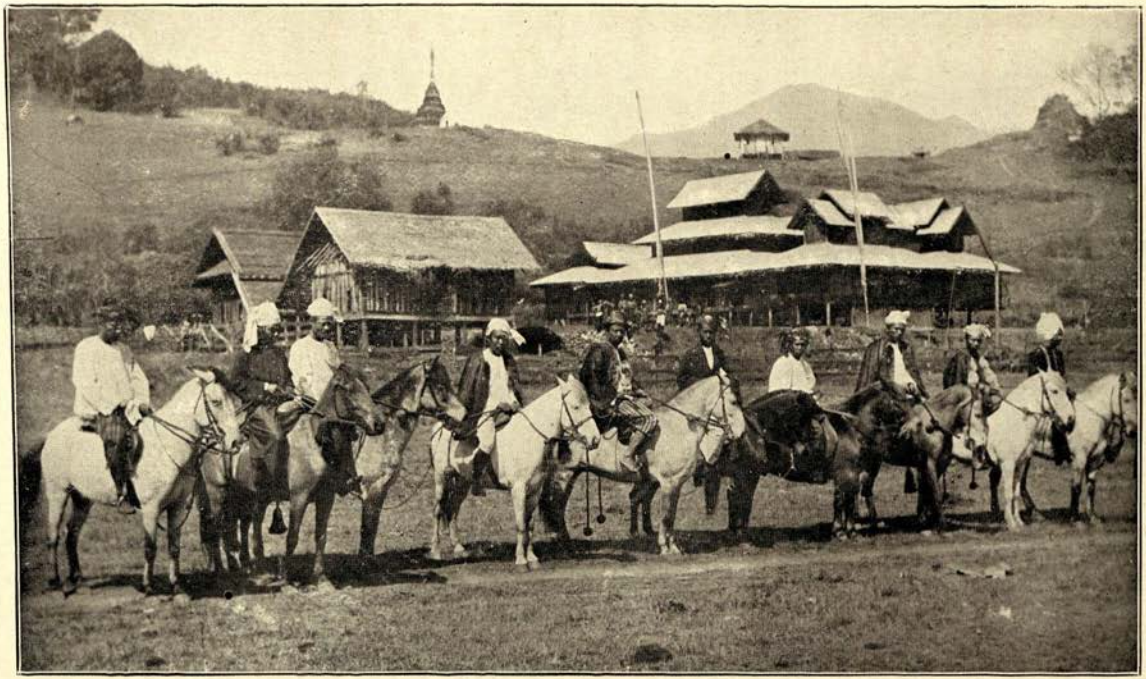
As we returned, Win Tien told me there was a priest who lived in one of the caves in the rock in absolute solitude, for whom the villagers left food, but who had never been seen, and was a complete hermit. Win Tien believes firmly in

[1] I was *née* Beauclerk.

the power of such men; he thinks that they can, for instance, get gold by secret methods (probably by means of elementals), and that they do so once to prove their power before withdrawing for ever to the silence of the cave or the jungle. He told me also that the monks have secret herbal remedies, and that he had seen a man healed of a withered hand by a monk applying ointment and pronouncing an incantation.

On our return drive, my husband again walked, to the admiration and surprise of the party, but without provoking any feeling of envy; whilst I told Win Tien about *The Soul of a People*, and how the author, Mr. Fielding Hall, had apparently found the Burmese a race of angels. He was as much amused as an Englishman would be if a Burman wrote of Britishers as being impeccable. I explained to him about our social life in England, the aristocracy, big landed proprietors, etc., and he was interested, I think.

The following day Win Tien came again to take us out. He looked both pleased and surprised when he saw me, and I wondered what thought prompted his peculiar expression. He had loaned a carriage and pair from a Burmese friend, and very startling these two noble animals were. They were dappled-grey, like rocking-horses, and had long, flowing tails, which their Burmese owner had dyed a bright red. We drove about the town, which is very picturesque, and I noticed again how, on the river front, which is the Burmese



GROUP OF MOUNTED BURMANS

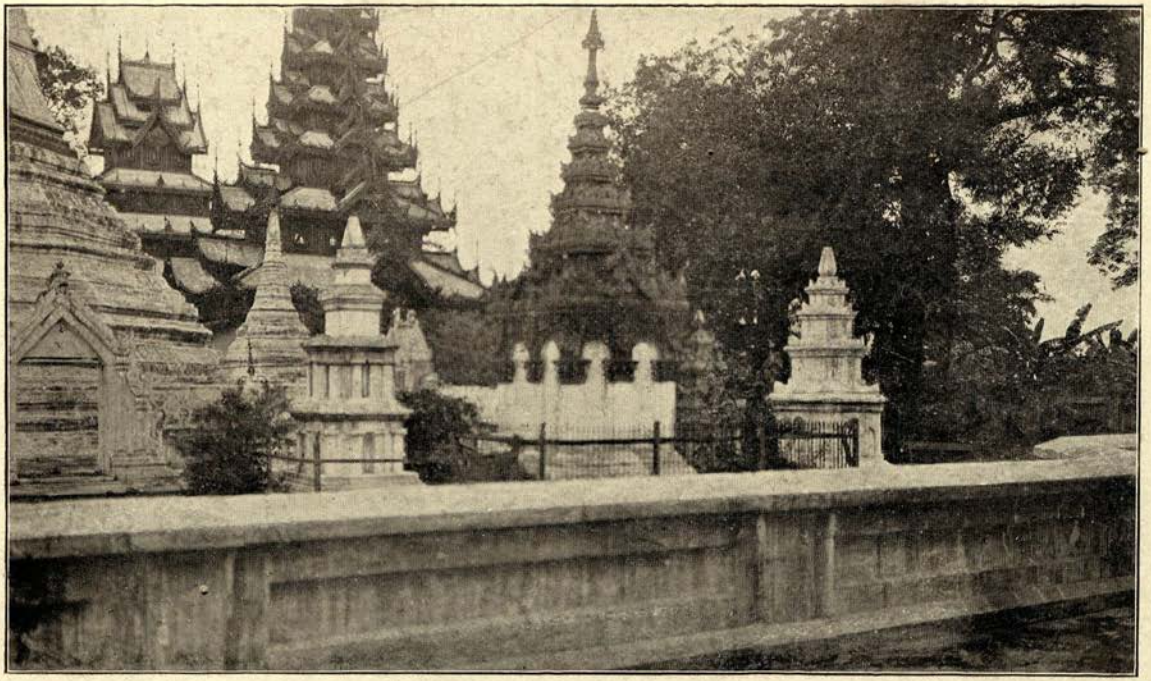
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fashionable drive and promenade, all eyes were turned upon me with something like veneration. The Explorer remarked this too and looked at me to discover the cause. The next moment my hat had to come off, and I was obliged to take out my favourite peacock feather with which I had adorned it, in spite of protests from the superstitious, for I have a fetish for peacocks. Talbot *is* superstitious, and had objected to my having the feather on board; but the ship had not sunk in spite of it, and of the size of the hat. I know to my cost how trying it can be to arouse the fear of omens. For example, if, when starting on an expedition I forget something and we go back for it, the going back presages bad luck: then all day, whatever evil happens, it is due to this ill-starred action of mine —the rain, the mosquito bites, the lack of orchids, all are direct consequences of the fatal deed. Of course, I only call other people's beliefs superstitions, but not so my own; for a superstition *is* another man's belief. The reason of the looks which were cast on me was that the Burmese regard the peacock as a sacred bird, so I shared a reflected sanctity for a brief period.

In Moulmein the most beautiful carving in ivory is done, paper-cutters and mirrors being the articles most usually embellished in this wonderful way. They are formed from one piece of ivory, and the design is generally a figure seen through fine, open-work carving; they are very inexpensive, considering the delicacy of the work.

One more excursion Win Tien took us upon, and this was to Kado, to the Burmese monasteries and pagodas of Kawnhal. They are quite modern, but very large, ornate and interesting, with their carvings and statues and paintings, their chanting priests and scholastic calm. After wandering about, shoeless and impressed, we were refreshed at the house of a Burman, who gave us fruit and biscuits, and presents of ivory spoons for our babes. He spoke happily of his life in the sleepy village, and his magnificent offerings to the glory of Buddha, for his father had founded and he had greatly added to the huge buildings and enclosures which we had visited. This life, without books as we understand them, for the literature of the Burmese is still, so to speak, mediæval, and deals with legends and archaic ideas, without sport or travel or change seemed to be all he asked: for "his mind to him a kingdom was."

We had to bid Win Tien adieu that evening. He would have seen us off next day, but had a special engagement, so could not do so; and we parted regretfully at the house of Mr. Murray, who had some good orchids in his garden. Win Tien promised to send us some plants later on from the jungle, which promise he faithfully performed. Mr. Murray had a beautiful *Thunia* out, but otherwise his plants were not specially interesting. We tried afterwards to get some at the house of a Burman, whose daughters, however, were much more lovely than his orchids.



THE PAGODAS AT KADO

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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The next day we sailed, and, much against our inclination, had to go north again to Rangoon, as only from there could we take a steamer to Tavoy, where we wished to go, and which lay south of Moulmein.

CHAPTER XIX

MERGUI

"Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea."
TENNYSON—*Locksley Hall.*

THE steamer, which belonged to the Asiatic Line, stank dreadfully of dorians. We had heard fearful descriptions of this smell, and of how the odour nauseated one, but so far we had not been greatly troubled. The smell now, however, was like bad cheese and rotten fruit mixed into one awful compound. The dorian is said to taste delicious, and Wallace in his travels narrates how he enjoyed this fruit. I believe too that when cut it does not smell, so that it should be opened in the garden before being eaten in the house. However, I never could bring myself to touch one, after having had the misfortune to be cooped up with a shipful of them, sailing with a following breeze.

The Chinese, needless to say, enjoy them as much as they do rotten eggs and a few other delicacies of the sort; and it is chiefly on account of the numerous Celestials in Burma that the dorian is so important an item in commerce. People had, of course, exaggerated the discomfort proceeding from them, and from the monsoon, which was now

just beginning; but Talbot had learnt, years before I met him, never to take counsel when travelling, even from people who knew the country. Difficulties are always exaggerated, and discomforts magnified, and one would not go far did one listen to people's advice.

Another disgusting smell we suffered from on a later part of our journey was "nappe," which is made by putting uncleaned fish in a walled-in enclosure till it becomes putrid. Bamboos are run into this, and act as drains; and the liquid, which is thus drawn away from the rest, is bottled and used in curries. The residue of this decomposed fish is also accounted a delicacy, though inferior, of course, to the undiluted essence. It seems that, in these parts, foods are chosen not for their pleasing tastes, but for their loathsome smells. A third pest on board these coast ships is prawn dust, which is used as manure. As these goods are more important than the passengers, one becomes, after journeying up and down the coast of Burma, a humble individual with a nose chronically wrinkled and upturned in disgust.

After an enforced wait of a couple of days in Rangoon, we sailed for Mergui, in company with two missionaries, a Catholic priest and an American Baptist woman. The Catholics have in Rangoon a big college with two hundred Burmese boys, whom they instruct without trying to change their religious opinions. The teaching given them is very useful, and helps those who wish to become clerks or business men, thereby supplying what would other-

wise be a distinctly "felt want." The Americans have schools for boys and girls near Tavoy, and their scholars are practically all Kerins. Now the Kerins are a product of Southern Burma, and have a patois of their own. They never live in towns, but are a rustic people, and what the advantage of teaching them European ideas can be, either to themselves or to anyone else, surpasses my most limited comprehension. The lady missionary became rather aggravated on board because she was chaffed about a letter that a native pupil, who had been promoted to being a mistress in the school, had written, which had somehow ultimately fallen into the hands of one of the officers on board. It was addressed to a young man and was extremely amorous. Such is the use education is put to, and such are its benefits—a maudlin and indecent letter! The people in these parts are not evolved enough to need education, and therefore naturally put what knowledge they acquire to the lowest possible use.

As we neared Mergui the funnel of a submerged steamer appeared above the surface of the water, a sight which somehow seemed familiar to me. The captain told me that it had figured in a picture in the *Strand Magazine*, represented there with a large plant growing out of the funnel, which plant is no longer in existence, having very possibly been choked in its confined position.

The heat on arrival at Mergui was terrible, for though the thermometer only registered ninety-nine degrees, one felt as though it must be well over a

hundred and two. The aspect of the place was, however, beautiful enough to mitigate the fatigue caused by the temperature. A hill crowned with white pagodas met our eye, whilst in the foreground lay the village with its palm-thatched roofs and its setting of palms.

We had a letter to the Chief Civil Service Official, who was absent at the time, so we made our way to his representative, walking uphill for about a mile. When the Chinese are asked the distance to any given place, they always reckon it as three times as long when ascending as they would a descent, and I never realized the wisdom which they throw into this calculation till we had climbed that so-called mile of road to Mr. N.'s house. We found him surrounded by panting terriers and silent, gaping bullfinches. We stayed and talked awhile with him, and then he showed us to the Circuit House.

I noticed in his bungalow that none of his servants sheltered from the midday sun under the inviting verandah, and subconsciously I wondered what the cause of this might be. I heard later that the Burman has a strong feeling against anyone walking over his head, which he looks upon as a degradation. Sometimes to avoid doing this, a Burman will put a ladder up to a window and so climb into a room rather than mount the stairs.

As we walked to the Rest House, where we intended spending a day or two, I again saw in the faces of the natives the half-joyous look I had seen at Moulmein when wearing the peacock's feather,

though here the look was more profane, so to speak. Shortly afterwards I heard that "Flora, Queen of the Handcuffs" was expected for the "Europe" Circus which had preceded us. They were mistaking me for that royal personage. I played the part as best I could by seeming to be talking of "gyves upon my wrists" as we walked through the town.

We purchased some of the beautiful purple grape fruit that were displayed in big baskets in the streets, and these we took into the Rest House to devour; but unfortunately we attacked the purple outer covering, and bitter indeed was the result, an acrid taste that dried up one's mouth. The white pips, covered with a sweet and liquid substance, that lay in the centre of the fruit, were the proper parts to suck, and, when I knew how to do it, I found it the one fruit I really liked in the East. The unfortunate Edward was, of course, persuaded to eat the husk first, and for once a light flush suffused his cheeks, as he politely retired to reject it from his mouth.

The view from this Circuit House was quite lovely, with the blue sea and the village below, and the glorious trees and palms between us and them. The bungalow too had a charming verandah, and we felt at home in it, a sensation very unlike that with which some of the dusty and ugly Rest Houses had inspired us.

Mergui is famous for its pearl fisheries. The natives dive without any diver's dress, and remain for several minutes under the water. They are

gathered from all the nations, the Chinese and Japanese predominating in numbers. Poor creatures, they nearly all end by becoming paralysed, owing to the great strain put upon their constitutions by remaining so long under the water without any proper appliances for breathing.

We also saw some pearl blisters, which are mother-of-pearl prominences in the shell. These are cut out and can be set in artistic mounts, being often beautifully formed. They also have a certain small value. The natives make mother-of-pearl plates, both decorated and plain, and other small objects; but though the former would have looked pretty for fruit, we did not buy any, as somehow they seemed reminiscent of the sort of present a sailor would bring home to his mother.

After our eleven o'clock meal we went to the garden of the Resident, Mr. Wilkinson, accompanied by Mr. Underwood, his *chargé d'affaires*. We had written to Mr. Wilkinson before our arrival, telling him of our orchid quest, and he had very kindly sent into the jungle and procured a lot of orchids for us. He was himself at Victoria Point when we got to Mergui. We looked through the orchids, which were mostly dendrobiums, and were hung on a cord in the garden between two trees. Then we found in his garden a *Sacolabium giganteum*, which was not then in flower, and has seldom flowered in Europe. This is, of course, a very rare orchid, and great was our delight therewith. There were also two *gramatophyllums*, though not of the largest variety. We sorted them all

and hung them up on a line in the garden to be dried, so that when they were ready they could be sent to the Curator in Rangoon to be re-packed and despatched to England with the rest.

CHAPTER XX

THE CIRCUS

"Oh, the blood more stirs to rouse a lion than to start a hare."
SHAKESPEARE—*Henry IV.*

I MUST give the circus a chapter to itself, for it is quite specially recorded in my memory.

A curly-haired Swiss trainer, with azure eyes, and open shirt, big riding-boots, and a strong smell of animals, had taken the lower rooms in the bungalow of which we had the upper portion. He slept on the table, snoring loudly, most of the day, but in between his slumbers we made his acquaintance, in spite of the growls and snarls of his satellite, an ill-starred cur. He said he was a trainer, who travelled with wild beasts that belonged to Haggenback, the greater Jamrach of Germany, and that at night we should be entertained if we went to see him and his performing animals. We accordingly promised to do so, upon which he again lay down on the table, after having pressed drinks upon us, and was soon lost in slumber. This was not ill-timed, as he was always up the greater part of the night.

We dined well, and then, being joined by an

Englishman and his sister, with whom we had made acquaintance that afternoon, we wended our way to the tent where the first European performance ever witnessed by a Burmese audience was to take place. A charming sight greeted us as we neared it. By the roadside women sat selling sweets and flowers, their goods set out on broad leaves and lit by little oil lamps and by torches which shone back redly to the yellow stars. A merry silken crowd bustled laughing about, for when an entertainment takes place the Burmese come from far to see it, and spend the night in the theatre, eating and drinking and sleeping, and awaiting the continuation of the play, which runs on for several days. They must have felt disappointed at the short duration of the white man's show, for in the road was cheer and provision enough for a protracted continuance of pleasure. A Burman, his eyes probably too crinkled up with laughter to see us, stumbled into Miss ——'s way, upon which her brother brought down his riding whip—with which he had equipped himself in view of such occurrences apparently—on to the fellow's shoulders. Our compatriot was lucky, I considered, not to have been knifed by a dah, but a Sikh soldier-policeman hurried away the innocent offender. We disapproved very much of this action, but when we afterwards heard that this same offending Englishman had thrown pebbles over a screen at his god and chief, a former Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, to distract him from a too lengthy game of bridge, we viewed his behaviour to the Burman much less severely, for where so many sycophants

are, this revolt from convention was pleasing to hear of.

We were met at the door of the tent by the Hindu manager, a man with a face so like certain pictures of Christ that the resemblance seemed positively irreverent. He showed us into a bench just in front of a large circular space barred in by a rickety erection consisting of iron rails. The audience sat round, the men stripped to the waist; indeed in nudity they outstripped the fashionable ladies at a gala performance at a London opera—impossible as this may appear to be. Clowns and acrobats came first, and I watched this virgin audience with the keenest interest. They were actually more amused than even a British audience would have been at a similarly unintellectual show (another assertion which must sound mendacious!), but they evinced less emotion than a London crowd would have done at its first entertainment of the sort, though possibly as much as a south-country yokel audience would have displayed. To me there is always a breathless interest in watching acrobats. I feel it must be so delightful to be able to bound about like an indiarubber ball, and to be well enough to dance as do the ballet girls, who usually enjoy it, I fancy, as one often sees them hopping about behind the scenes whilst waiting to appear on the stage. (Genée often does this.) I should like to see them in ordinary clothes. There is something almost uncanny in the idea of a man who can bend like a bow wearing an orthodox suit, or a woman who can touch her back hair with her toes being

garmented like the rest of us. It seems impossible to think of these elastic creatures as being physically almost exactly like their fellows when they are dead and dissected; yet a doctor has assured me that it is difficult to discover any difference whatever, save that in the case of an acrobat a few muscles would be developed which are usually not very prominent.

"I say that the human shape or face is so great, it must never be made ridiculous,"[1] kept ringing in my head. When I saw the clowns and the acrobatic girls, poor children, treated like dolls on wires and thrown about to please a crowd, I could but realize that people who thus make themselves absurd for an audience, or who from their earliest youth are flung about from hand to hand and turned into mere performing animals, cannot be expected to have any very high ideal of their own worth and dignity.

Enough, however, of my personal reflections, for now the first part of the circus is over and the performance of the animals is to begin.

A native fanned us where we sat, for the night was heavy with heat. Suddenly, on the still Eastern air, now only vibrating with low laughter and the soft Burmese speech, came the savage southern roar of the lions, loud, angry, terrible. Confined in narrow cages, and taken about on the rough seas from place to place, the beasts were wild and furious, and one had already torn and mutilated the arm of a Burman, who had gone too near the cage to look

[1] Walt Whitman.

at the king of the desert. Now only one cage was to be brought in, as the other animals were beyond control. Into the ring within two feet of us first came a tiger and tigress, and, facing them, a Eurasian trainer, bold, young and dauntless. There were very few tricks to be done: the great feat was to restrain the beasts sufficiently to prevent their hurling themselves upon the trainer, for the tiger was terrible with his teeth showing and his tail lashing from side to side in suppressed rage. He watched the tigress doing her feeble performance, and waited, crouching and growling. The trainer paled visibly as the minutes of fierce anger went by, each one pregnant with death. At last the tigress's tricks had been gone through, and she sprang back to her mate, and paused and licked him, and seemed to be trying to quieten him. They were fierce, sullen and amorous, all in turn; and finally most difficult to force back into the cage. The only thing they seemed to fear was a little fork which the trainer held. When at last they retreated snarling, our English friends left us, as Miss —— was upset by the nerve-racking scene. I wanted also to go, but the Explorer very truly said that it was foolish sentiment on my part to wish to leave, as, if the trainer were fated to be killed, it would hurt him just as much whether I were there to see the tragedy or not. We women have so little imagination or real sympathy that we do not mind what happens as long as we do not see it; and I, in common with most of my sex, would have been much less dis-

tressed at hearing on the following day that the man had been devoured piecemeal than by seeing the tiger chew his hand off. Eating meat, wearing sweated labour clothes, fur, feathers, and the hundred other heartless things we do, all come from this lack of imagination. Men will kill and eat their prey: few women would do so. We are full of mawkish sentiment, but have little real pity. Thus reflecting, I succumbed to Talbot's logic, and we stayed.

The Eurasian left the ring, and a man went round to see if the insecure railing were likely to hold out during the rest of the performance, and seemed to think it probably would. Then they brought in the lioness. Our little Swiss trainer was now in the ring. All signs of sleep had disappeared; he was alive, masterful, extraordinarily plucky, whilst the lioness was hardly tamed or trained. He got her on to a stool; she leapt up growling, and sat there outraged at being part of a show in a circus. The Swiss then brought her a bottle and gave her milk, which she drank. Suddenly she lifted her paw and struck him. He reeled and staggered, but just preserved his balance. For a second his face contracted painfully, for his danger had been great. A few minutes later, by bad luck, he dropped the training fork, the only thing she feared, so that now he had only his whip. He made a semicircle away from the fork that the lioness, her attention not being immediately drawn to his unarmed condition, might continue her trick, and allow him to regain it whilst

she was on the stool. Then followed for us some seconds of breathless fear. The trainer had to pick up the fork, and the lioness knew this. He got round slowly to it; she jumped off the stool and followed, crouching and hiding behind the little properties in the ring, the stool, the barrel and the drum. Her hair was erect and her eyes intent. Suddenly he gave a quick bend and the fork was regained. After this he had to get the poor fierce thing back again to her prison, and she tried to escape the misery of returning to her narrow cage. Round and round the ring, almost within reach of us had we leaned forward, she glided growling, and it seemed as if she never would go back; but at last the man won. It was sad to see the creatures forced to do things so foreign to their nature; it always is so; for they are doomed to years of imprisonment to give us our 'money's worth.' But, much as I object to that sort of performance, I am glad we saw this one in the Far East. It was a triumph of mind over matter. The men were really at the mercy of the beasts: one moment of fear and hesitation and all would have been over, but they had won through sheer pluck, and it stirred one to see it.

We walked back with our Swiss Daniel, and I asked him if he ever feared. He said it never crossed his mind to think about the danger: it was just his work. He took it as naturally as he did his fearful whisky, which is, after all, as likely to kill him as are the lions.

All night the little pagoda bells sang together

in the breeze their poem of praise for the cooling joy of the night air, and beyond them the angry roars of the tigers and the lions came like a chorus of resentment against the power of the eye of man.

CHAPTER XXI

ADIEU TO MERGUI

Well, mine oyster's the world.[1]

THE following day we embarked again on our very small steamer, the captain[2] of which was a most cultivated and charming man. He was intensely and happily religious in a most agreeable way. It permeated his whole person, and was really a gift with him, like music is with a few, or a real life's love with still rarer people.

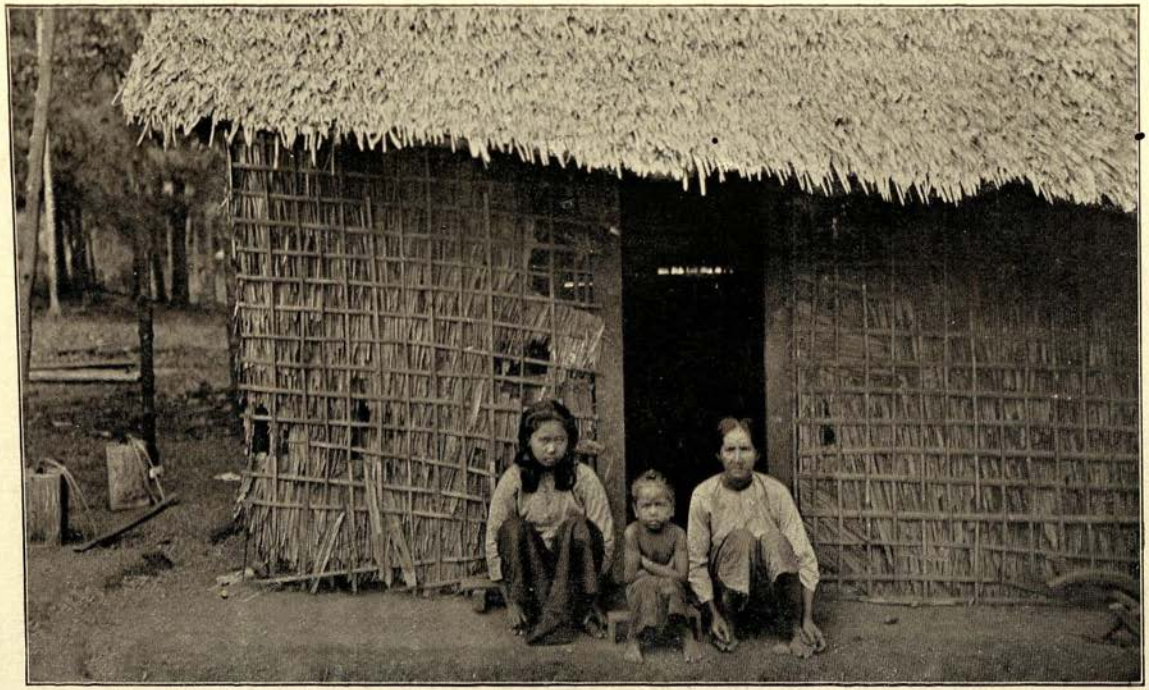
Just after we went on board, we attempted to join him at lunch, but my husband was turned aside by the steward, who said that I might pass, but that he must wait till we had finished. Thinking this might be a wise provision of the captain's, when a nice-looking woman came on board, he strolled past to his chair, but ere long discovered that the steward mistook him, not unnaturally, as I told him, for a second-class passenger. The steward had made some mistake with the tickets, as a matter of fact, and had gone to the purser and said how curious it was that a lady was travelling first with two white men in the second-class, an action that

[1] Shakespeare à l' Américain.

[2] He came from Guernsey, but alas! I cannot recall his name.

would have been well in keeping with my impersonation of Queen Flora. Edward was often, of course, the only white man in the second class, but he was always most considerately treated, and on these small ships got first-class accommodation.

On this trip we were the only passengers, and the monsoon was close upon us. All day we sailed through the pearl-gifted seas that lay between the green islands, and all day we saw the land. We sat in the bow of the ship, and the breeze blew on us fragrantly, whilst the water lapped musically against the vessel, but the sky foretold the terrible monsoon. We passed great islands of rock, with but little verdure upon them. These are called the Marble Rocks, but are composed of crumbling lime and are probably volcanic, as some craters can be distinctly seen. We passed also the Kissering Island, where is a buried city, but it is dangerous on account of tigers and snakes—a spot of hidden history and adventure that tempted the Explorer greatly. The steamer never stops there, and we hurried on for fear of the monsoon; otherwise we might have taken a small boat to the island, when we reached a port where we could have chartered one. All this coast is practically uninhabited, a few fishermen only living here. In one part an American has a tank, into which the tide brings the oyster spawn. He is said to irritate the oyster after it has developed from the spawn, which primary process takes several months. When he thinks he has caused it to produce a pearl, he examines it with Röntgen rays, and, if the pearl is small he waits for



SIAMESE GROUP, taken at Victoria Point
(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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it to grow—seemingly a most scientific process, but possibly the whole story is only an amusing myth.

Towards evening the monsoon came upon us in the form of a heavy swell. I had to retire, which in itself was painful, as the cabins, though scrupulously clean, were full of biting ants, which had already attacked me whilst I rested in the day. We afterwards slept on deck in consequence of this, and the next morning sighted the welcome port. The smell of prawn dust when the ship is rolling is a fearsome thing, and since this steamer is not large she naturally responds to every movement of the heaving sea. She was, in addition, built on extraordinary lines—her keel being almost circular—in fact, she was rounded below in a most unorthodox way, which made her a somewhat perilous instrument of transit during the monsoon.

CHAPTER XXII

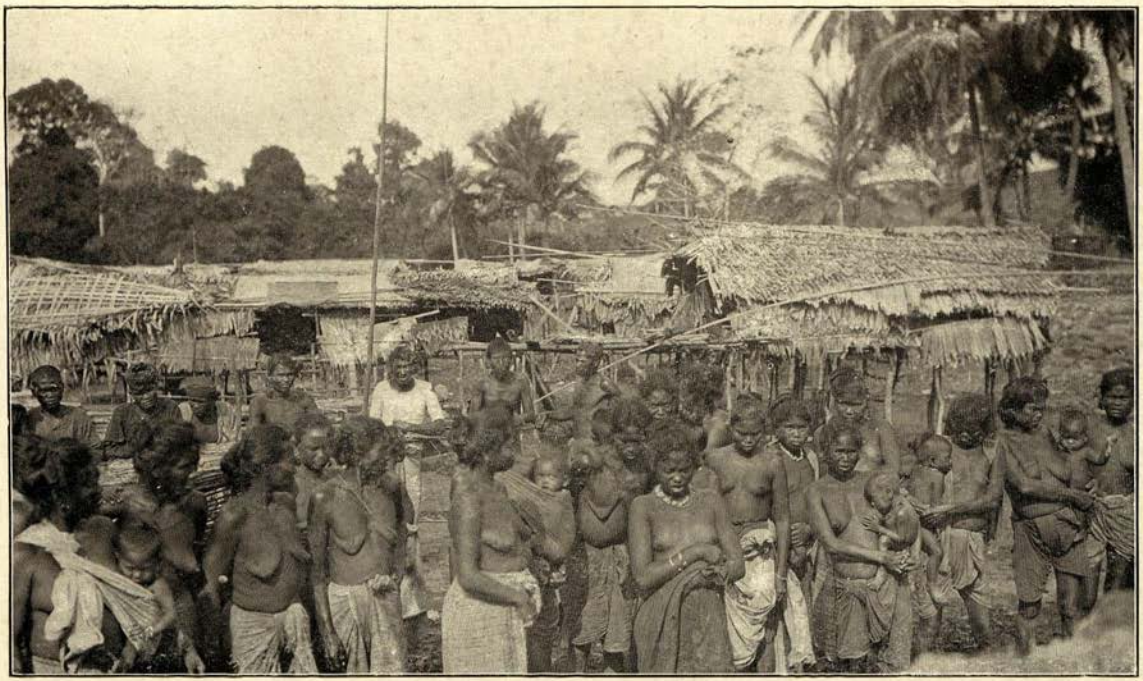
VICTORIA POINT

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

TENNYSON.

WE landed and walked up to the Rest House, where Mr. Wilkinson, whom we had failed to meet at Mergui, was staying. He and his wife and baby were going up on a launch to visit some neighbouring places, where are tin mines, so we only had time just to make his acquaintance, but he kindly put his cook and his house at our disposal. His poor baby, whom we saw, was a pathetic, pale little thing, all its strength drawn out of it by the great tropical heat, but I afterwards heard that when it got home it quickly recovered its health.

A semi-bleached official, who lived near the Circuit House, then walked us round the town. Our ship now lay near the shore, opposite which is the coast of Siam. The whole Archipelago is three hundred miles long, and may well be called the back-door of the world. Victoria Point is said,



GROUP OF SALÔNS

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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by people who know Burma, to have the loveliest view of any place in that country, and, indeed, it is beautiful, with a sort of Irish loveliness that especially endears it to the Britisher. Instead of the usual tangle of vegetation, grassy slopes are seen, both on this side and across the bay, upon which cattle feed. Solitary trees stand out, looking very much like firs, and the word "Killarney" haunts one's memory.

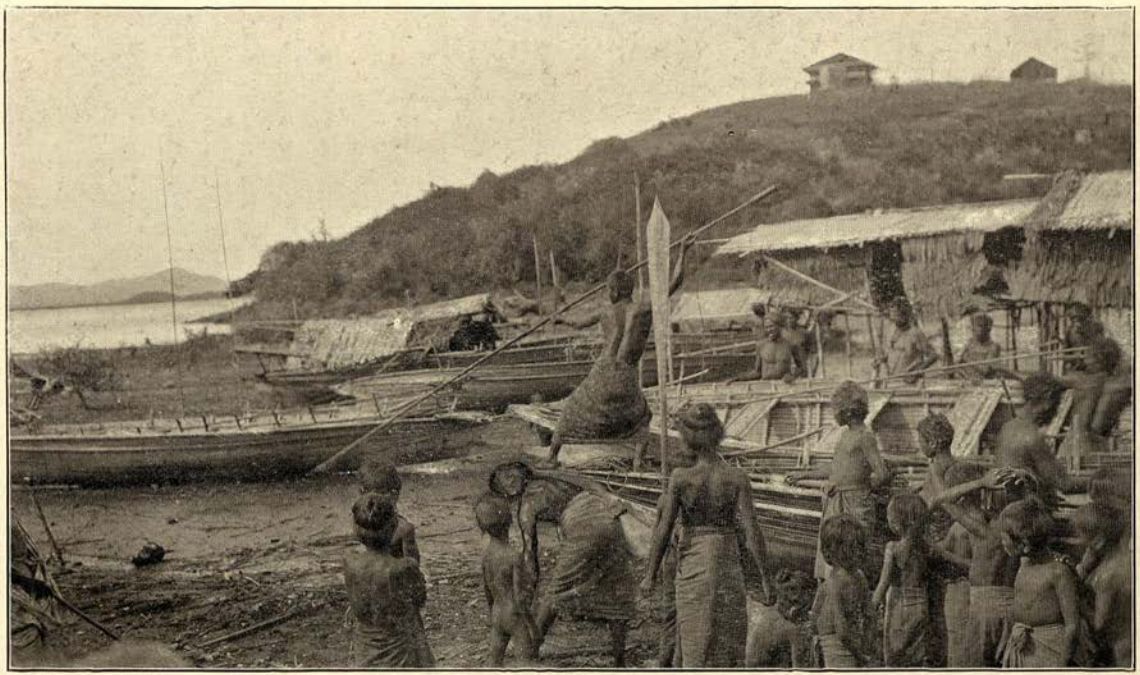
There are no pagodas, and so the illusion of being at home is complete, but it is soon dispelled on getting into the town. There the queerest folk are to be seen, who are called "Salôns," the Gipsies of the Sea. Their natural instinct was to hide from the pale faces, but we persuaded them to reappear, which they did, clothing themselves as much as they could, which is little. The blushing Edward had to photograph them, but he was by that time getting used to nudity. What a curious primal people these are! They have only lately learnt to build any sort of dwelling. Thirty years ago they knew only their boats. Each of their craft is a big construction of wood and reed, with a palm leaf for a sail. Now they have learnt to build rude erections standing in the mud by the water, but they are always ready at any moment to get into their boats and go off to one of the islands. They live almost entirely on fish, and these they spear, jumping down on the big fish, just as do the Andamanese, whilst for shell fish they dive. When they die they are left unburied on the island on which they have perished.

As shown in the photograph, the anatomy of the women is peculiar, for their breasts, shaped like the flaps of envelopes, fall triangularly on their bodies. These people are brown, though some are white, and that with ringworm, with which their bodies are absolutely covered. It is an irritating and contagious disease, but can be cured with sulphur; but they would not use this remedy, I was told, even were it to be given to them. For our benefit, these Salôns played at fish-spearing, and very heartily they laughed. Indeed it was good to hear them—though not to smell them!

The town itself contains a mixed population of Chinese, Malays, and Siamese. Of the latter we got a photograph, which does not, however, pourtray the sitters, a mother and daughter, as looking nearly as pretty as they actually did, with their clear skins and dark hair.

Within fifteen miles of us tigers and rhinoceros are to be found, and not long before our visit a tiger had come right into the town. There is some good fishing, whilst, in the feathered world, the *toucan* is prominent, the big brilliantly-coloured bird with his large beak, who, when his mate is in charge of the young, seals and blocks up the entry to the hollow in the tree where the nest is, and feeds her through a small hole until the young are able to learn to fly.

In the untidy little village we bought some edible birds' nests at great price from a Chinese. These are made from the saliva of a species of swallow, which birds expectorate on the cliffs until they have



THEY ENACT FISH-SPEARING FOR US

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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formed a glutinous support. I gave these nests at a dinner party in England served in a strong *consommé* to which they added a subtle flavour. In taste and appearance they somewhat resemble vermicelli.

We had one last unpleasant night and day on a sea perturbed by the monsoon; and then a brief visit to a Siamese port.

Chinese stores, a big market, and some poor wild beasts in low, narrow cages blocked in behind—these are my chief impressions of the port. The animals belong to a native ruler, and he apparently finds pleasure in seeing them crouching in the damp and semi-darkness of their foul cages which surround his palace wall.

The captain tells me that the missionaries have done much good here among the Chinese, and that a new spirit of kindliness and of sobriety has spread throughout the community in this town through the efforts of the Christians.

The Siamese and Chinese are so alike and so related that this might well be quite a Chinese town.

After this we hurried on, and later entered Penang, leaving behind us the Indian Empire and Burma.

Malay

It would seem as though ideas came to flowers in the same way as to us. The flowers grope in the same darkness, encounter the same obstacles, the same ill-will, the same unknown: they have the same laws, the same disillusions, the same slow and difficult triumphs.

. . . . . .

We shall find the most perfect and the most harmonious manifestations of vegetable intelligence among the orchids. In these writhing and eccentric flowers, the genius of the plant touches its extreme point, and with an unusual fire pierces the wall that separates the kingdoms.

MAETERLINCK—*Life and Flowers.*

CHAPTER XXIII

OF PENANG AND PERAK

"If there are worms in the earth, need one dig them up?"[1]

Malay Proverb.

We had only felt the first winds and rains of the south-west monsoons, but the full terror of it had not burst upon us with its cyclonic force when we safely made Penang. We left India and the Archipelago with a sigh, as we had travelled a little known tract and had seen much of interest, from an empire to an island, from a viceroy to a convict, from white men in exile to aborigines at home.

The temperature we had suffered had usually been about ninety-three degrees, but sometimes the thermometer had registered a hundred and three; but then we had chosen the hottest time of the year, for our whole trip was just a pilgrimage to the shrines of the orchids, made between the advent of our second and third baby, and the wings of the stork were shadowing our journey and darkening it all the way.

[1] A good saying for many people to remember, and should be specially borne in mind by realistic writers.

I have a relative who is Resident in Kuala Lumpur, and to him we looked for direction in our journeys in Malay. We found letters from him on our arrival in Penang, saying that he was absent on an official tour, but that Colonel Walker, commander of the Sikh garrison in Perak, would kindly entertain us and send us on to other places until we could come to him. He gave us a letter to Mr. Bland, the Resident Councillor in Penang, who was most kind to us, lending us his motor to go to the Botanical Gardens, and inviting us to dine with him that night, which we did.

The temperature in Penang was delicious, only eighty-three in the shade, and the hotel commands a most lovely view of the bay, dotted with junks, large Chinese vessels with sails, and native sampans, smaller boats that gracefully glided to and fro in the beautiful harbour. Hills rise above the town and gladden one's eyes across the bay; and the city too is beautiful, with its good buildings and its many Chinese shops, adorned with carved and lacquered doors. I had my first experience of a rickshaw on the morning of our arrival, and a most charming mode of locomotion it is. I very much desired and long pondered bringing home to England a rickshaw and an Easterner, but the *cons* outweighed the *pros*, so I gave up my intention.

The orchids in the gardens were mostly botanical[1]

[1] The term "botanical" designates orchids which, though of interest from a horticultural point of view, are not beautiful or decorative plants. They are usually very small.

species, though *Gramatophyllum* and *Renanthera* were the exceptions. The *Renanthera* is a variety of the *Vanda* family. The most remarkable species which we saw was a sweet-smelling *Renanthera*, shaped and spotted like a spider.

We left Penang at eight o'clock next day, and travelled for three hours in a most comfortable train, going through rubber estates most of the way. The railway was built out of state surplus, and is therefore unique. Thus we reached Taiping in Perak and received a warm welcome, though this is an unpleasant idea in the burning East, from Colonel Walker, who drove us off to his lovely house. I think the view from it appealed to me almost more than any I had seen during this journey. Wide lawns, broken up by flowering shrubs and tall bamboos, stretch down to the sides of a lake, the Resident's and the Colonel's gardens and the public park being joined together in one splendid expanse, where the gems of the jungle stand out individually, brilliant in colour and lovely in shape. Behind this charming and cultivated space, the hills, thickset with trees and undergrowth, stand encircling the plain.

The bungalow was also delightful inside, and very different from most Eastern houses, for art and literature and home were here, all these graces being evidently beloved by the owner. Books lay about everywhere and quantities of photographs, making the rooms individual; and in vases were violets and roses from the hills. The walls were

ornamented by lines of blue and green and rose-red China plates, both hanging up and placed on shelves, mostly from the Yellow Empire, and some of them hundreds of years old.

The Malay bathroom is worthy of note. It contains a huge earthenware jar, the sort of thing one of Ali Baba's thieves must have hidden in. This is full of cold water, and by it is a little tin can. The bather stands on the stone floor and throws the water over himself, and this is deliciously cooling, more so than the orthodox tub, I think, because one has an air bath as well as a water bath.

Five happy days we spent with the Colonel in this lovely place, and met some charming people, amongst whom were the Resident and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Birch,[1] who were most genial and hospitable. My husband and I both had chills, which make one feel terribly ill in the East, but the "master" (as Lancashire women call their husbands) was able to play golf, and I used to drive about with the Colonel, looking at tin mines and the surrounding country. These are all worked on the surface, in shallow dips dug out, which is much less expensive than running down shafts. Those which have been worked out are left destitute of verdure, and spoil the look of the country, but nature soon covers the wound, though not with so much beauty as had the virgin soil.

Here I shall again take up my diary, as our next experience consisted of an excursion into the hills.

[1] Now Sir Ernest and Lady Birch.

Monday, May 10th.—The Colonel is delightful. He is as keen about the orchids as we are, so to-morrow we leave Taiping to go up to the Resident's house in the hills, which he has lent us. It stands four thousand feet above the bungalow. It was from here that the violets and roses and the vegetables that we had below all came. The Colonel is not at all well, so we are hoping this change will do him good. It will be delicious to feel a cool breeze once more, for the damp heat is trying, though I do not feel it as much as I did in Burma.

We are paying Indian coolies and some Malays to go into the jungle and get orchids, which they will bring every evening to our house set on the hill. We are in hopes of procuring some good specimens. The Colonel's servants are some of them Chinese, and some of them Malays, and he commands a regiment of Guides—Sikhs, that is—which he formed himself in quite the early days of the British settlement in Malay.

We shall be carried by natives of Bengal. I dread it rather, as the chairs are like those in the Andamans, and I shall feel a brute, I know. Talbot insists on walking up.

Monday, 17th.—We left at eight o'clock, Edward remaining below. I was carried up by a team of four naked Hindus, one to each shaft, and four others to relieve them at stated places. Ere long a young native carrier dropped his pole and lay down

in the path, where he was left as one dead, a harrowing incident! I walked as much as I could, but the way is steep and long. Of course there are short cuts, but by these the chair could not be taken, as they are all much steeper than the main path. We arrived at the hut at one o'clock. The men laughed all the way up and talked very loudly, and I thought they were cheery, but heard later that probably they were saying obscene things and swearing. The Colonel's team, which started later than mine, had to maintain silence. The ferns on the way up are quite wonderful, and at the top are tree ferns, standing about eight feet high with rough, bare stems and stiff green fronds.

The arrival was most joyous. Talbot, masses of English flowers, the most charming bungalow, and food for the hungry, all these awaited me, and in the evening we lit the companionable fire of logs. What is so good as a fire in the hills when one has been suffering from the tropical heat of the plains?

The view is superb, the mountains rolling away in three ranges, two of which are generally visible. That is what one sees behind the bungalow: on the other side, far below us, is Taiping, and various rivers and lakes, and the great gashes formed by mines, many of them filled with water too. The sunset surpassed all words—such purple and crimson and gold, such floods of colour, that every flower is illuminated; and then a gentle fading away into blues and pinks and greys and tender mists,

in turn hiding and revealing the hills and the trees; too much beauty, so exquisite as to be like some music, almost unbearable in its perfection.

Tuesday, 18*th*.—We walked in the jungle. Big goats live in it, but one rarely sees them; tigers too there are, and lots of monkeys, which one hears. One ought to be as wise as the gods really to appreciate all these, for every leaf is a book, and there is a plenteous variety of growing wonders. The butterflies are dark, and the birds are mostly silent.

Our native orchid hunters brought us in some Cœlogynes, the blossoms of which grow in long sprays: one of these was white, which is rare. Some dendrobiums, not in flower, they had also found, and a few other uninteresting species. We hear there is a black orchid in the Malay States, but no one seems quite to know where it is or what it is like, it will be our constant quest henceforward.

We have such interesting talks in the evening about every sort of thing. To-night the Colonel told us about the Sikhs. They are extraordinary automatons, and will carry out an order to the death, but will never have the initiative to alter it, even should such a course be necessary. This characteristic is illustrated by the following incident, though I do not remember the details quite accurately. It happened somewhat thus; during a fight in Malay, the Sikhs were ordered to fire on the enemy across a river, but even when the

enemy had fled and our men had taken their place the Sikhs continued gaily to carry out the order which had been given to them. Colonel Walker told us that the Sikhs are of Greek origin, being the descendants of the followers of Alexander when he overran and conquered India. There is certainly something very Grecian in their type of physiognomy.

Friday, 21st.—We left the hills to-day. The Colonel is stronger than he was, so will be able to follow down in a few days' time. We have an invitation to stay in the biggest rubber estate in the peninsula. The Explorer went down the hill so fast, running most of the way, that he fainted at the bottom, and was ill when I arrived a couple of hours later, I having been carried down. He broke the record for speed, having descended in about an hour and a half, but his heart troubled him badly afterwards.

We entrained in the afternoon for Nebong Tabor, an hour and a half's journey, and were met at the station by Mr. Turner, the manager of the estate, which belongs to Sir John Ramsden, whose son, with his wife, is staying with the Turners. We drove down a rubber avenue. The roads are most beautifully kept, but that is so all over the peninsula; I never saw such good roads anywhere.

We dined seated in bags to save at least our nether limbs from the mosquitoes. Though this is not the bad season for them, I find them appalling



A Group of Malays, and a Chinaman—no Women appeared

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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even now. The estate, of course, has to be kept very well watered and the country here is flat and low, so that in the wet season these insects swarm in their thousands, and Mr. and Mrs. Turner have to sit in a metal cupboard on the verandah to avoid them, a construction that looks like a big meat safe and is lighted by electricity. All the houses in the peninsula have this mode of lighting.

I am stupid with neuralgia, and bled by mosquitoes, so must stop.

Saturday, 22nd.—Talbot and I drove to the big water reservoir to look for orchids. On the way we passed sugar-cane fields and acres of rice, and lots of rubber. The slender trees are no longer hacked down for the precious liquid, but tapped by a V-shaped incision being made in the bark, usually low down, a small pan being then placed beneath the cut, into which the milk-like liquid flows. It is afterwards taken into the sheds, and goes through a few simple processes before it is shipped home in long dry pieces. A good tree will yield about four ounces of rubber daily, making about twenty gallons in the season, which quantity would form about two pounds of pure rubber. We saw the sheds in which it is dried in long sheets, and others where it was being packed for export. The process is short, simple and inexpensive, whence arise the great profits which have lately been made out of rubber, and which are due also to there being no other article which can at all take the place of this

particular substance, the demand for which is daily growing.

On this and on other estates the labourers employed are nearly all Tamils, that is, natives of Southern India who speak the Tamil dialect. These men take to the Federated States their own customs and ceremonies, and at intervals there takes place in consequence the strange feat of Fire-walking as well as wild dances and devotions.

We were not in Malay during the Feast of the Fire-walking. Europeans take so little interest in these things that it is difficult to arrive at any understanding of what happens, but from what we could gather from a paper which I subsequently read upon a similar feast near Agra, the ceremony appears to take place somewhat after this manner.

To Kali, Goddess of Destruction, vows are made to brave the flames and fire; perhaps the devotee seeks to win thereby the threatened life of wife or child, or to draw down forgiveness of a sin. All day long the penitents fast and are prepared of priests, and then they bathe and cover their bodies with saffron and with garlands of flowers, the scent of which is overpoweringly fragrant.

The red sun goes down lighting a scarlet scene below, for the blood of slaughtered animals flows crimson to the Goddess, and the floor of fire is laid out on a platform slightly raised and extending for some eighteen or twenty feet, and is fanned by ecstatic Hindus. The charcoal is taken from a pyramid of flames that burns at a little distance off,



AN AVENUE OF RUBBER TREES
Note the incisions in the bark.
Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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and when the ground is like a living ruby the "sky clad" fanatics, blue with saffron powder, walk the flaming coals. Tom-toms sound their monotonous reiterated notes, drums are beaten, wild cries to Kali and the gods are raised. Reeling with excitement the naked ones walk slowly on the fiery pavement, cross and recross, run, fall and sometimes faint. The crowd becomes mad with it all, presses forward, even treads the coals. No one is burnt, and the sun goes down on the diminishing ecstacy of the believers. Ere a quarter of the strange hour is past the coals are cooling into ashes, and the mind of man has again proved its supremacy over his flesh.

In the realms of science as of faith this phenomenon is said to have taken place, for though some hypnotists have never compassed it, Delbœuf says that he, having first obtained permission of his patient, put her into a state of hypnosis and then suggested that her right arm should be insensible to pain. He next proceeded to burn both her arms with a hot bar. The following day her left arm gave her considerable pain and was inflamed and scarred, but the right one was unhurt and showed only "a defined eschar, the exact size of the iron, without inflammation or redness." The left arm was so painful on the second day that analgesia was suggested to the patient, whereupon "the wound soon dried and the inflammation disappeared."[1]

The reservoir is lovely, lying enclosed in hills

[1] Milne Bramwell.

and jungle, with a pathway round the water for about eight miles. There are tigers and wild pig in the jungle. We looked for orchids, but the natives would not go very far from the path in case of a tiger being near, and Talbot and I unfortunately looked on the wrong side, where no orchids grew. However, on our return we saw some dendrobiums growing on cocoanut palms, and Edward got a Malay to swarm up and get them for us. The Explorer was so stiff with his exertions of yesterday that he had to go to bed.

On Monday we left, thanking God that our lot was not cast in a rubber plantation! The unbeautiful country, the trees darkening the house, and the one and only topic of conversation—rubber—wearied one sorely. We returned joyfully to our Colonel's hospitable house, and to his enthusiasm for many things. More orchids had come down from the hills—nearly all cymbediums.

May 25th.—Last night, being the 24th May, Empire Day, we went on the President's illuminated barge, which had been cleverly transformed into a sort of warship. Planters had come from all the estates within three miles of Taiping, and great was the merriment and carousal. The Sikhs and Malays had put a girdle of lights right round the lake, and in the trees had hung lanterns, which lit up the frail bamboos and the emerald grass. The water was covered with barges, all cleverly decorated with flags and lights. The Chinese had a floating construction, made to look like a joss-

house, and there were many other ingenious arrangements. The native Rajah of Perak was present also, and the scene was very lovely in the clear tropical night. We supped under the trees, and afterwards the girls of our party danced cake-walks on the grass.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF POWERS, TEMPORAL, MAGICAL, AND MENTAL

"Princes are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times and which have much veneration, but no rest."—BACON.

On the 25th May, Mr. Birch took us in his motor to Kuala Kansa, where are schools of art for the revival of Malay workmanship. We drove between high hills and beneath marble rocks, and as we went Mr. Birch gave me an insight into native ways. Some Malays, like the Nicobarese, seem to object to having over many children, and the Resident told me that, when out snipe-shooting one day, he had seen a woman coming who, unconscious of his presence, performed various curious rites by the river-side, finally plunging into the water. When she emerged and reclothed herself, Mr. Birch approached her and asked the purport of her strange actions. She with laughter explained that the strange actions which he had witnessed were the means she had adopted to free herself of the unwanted attribute of maternity.

So, pleasantly conversing, we reached the bamboo



La Princesse Louitaine



A Group of Nicobarese in mixed attire

(Photos by J. Talbot Clifton)

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house of the Ranee Puteh Zeinab, the daughter of a former Sultan of Selanjor, by a wife who had run away with him from her husband, who was at one time Sultan in this province.[1] She came up, fresh and cool from the river where she had been bathing, and took us into her house. It contained an ugly mixture of European and Malay objects, the chief ornaments being German prints. Then we all, excepting her husband, went into the bedroom to look at her clothes, and to choose what she should wear, for we wanted to see her dressed in her finest things. There was a European bed in the corner of the room, with heaps of cushions both of linen and velvet. Some of the velvet ones were sewn into tight little bolsters, with the ends embroidered in gold and silver thread. These bolsters are used by all rich Malays, and in Java we found linen ones in our beds; very comfortable they are as a prop against one's back.

We saw all the Princess's clothes. She was charming about her toilet, and as natural as a little child. Mr. Birch interpreted all we wanted to say, and ultimately we chose a green muslin coat, with pink flowers, and a cotton skirt; and in these we afterwards photographed her. She put on also her heavy gold bangles, and her jewels set with diamonds, with a big buckle at her waist, which ornament is called a "pindie," and earrings and necklaces. Her husband looked on from afar, rather gloomily, I

[1] For this story see Swettenham's "Malay Romance" in *Malay Sketches.*

thought; and one felt that she was the ruling spirit, the dominant note in the dwelling. After photographing her, I got Mr. Birch to ask her if what Skeat said in his book, *Malay Magic*, were true, namely, that after child-birth Malay mothers are made to simmer on planks which are put over braziers. Malay women are so natural and unaffected that there was, I think, nothing indelicate in asking this; also she had known Mr. Birch since she was a baby. Her husband stood frowning behind Mr. Birch, whilst the servants gathered round to listen, for the obsequiousness of the East is quite wanting in Malay, where courtesy is the rule everywhere, but deference is practically non-existent. The Princess said that women were never treated in the way described—in which she may or may not have been correct—and assured us that she had got up on the day of her child's birth, but so tightly bound up that moving could not hurt her.

Having spoken of one of the leading characteristics of the Malays, that is, their easy social equality, has put me in mind of some of their proverbs, for the saws of a people very often aptly express their views. Many of them show that they hardly expect to find sympathy from a superior. "The eye that looks on does not suffer: the shoulder that bears the burden gets to know its weight," so runs one proverb; and again, "What does the rasping matter to the rasp: it is the poor cocoanut that gets scraped to bits."

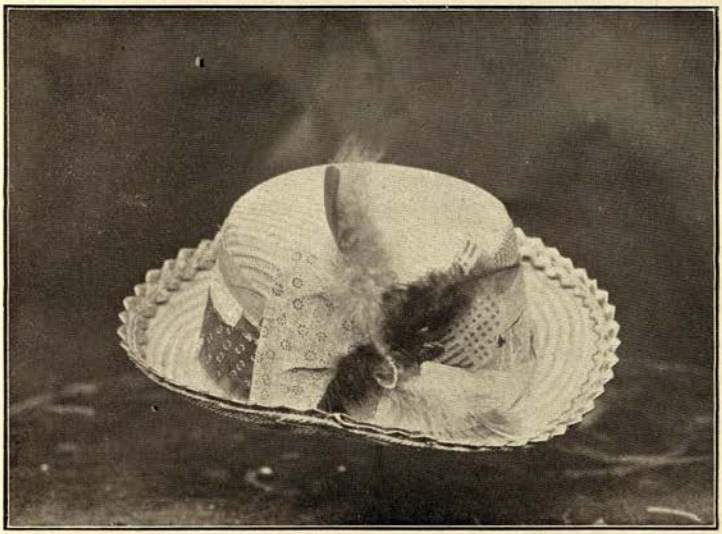
We at last tore ourselves unwillingly away from the Princess, and motored on till we reached the river, where a raft awaited us. The scenery here was beautiful; little huts lined the river bank, whilst away in the distance were jungle-covered hills. The Malay is above all things agricultural. He dates occurrences as having happened so many "years of maize" ago, or back so many "years of rice." His fortune grows with the rice crop, and fails with bad harvests, but next to this interest the river, perhaps, plays the largest part in his life. On the fortieth day after its birth, every infant is taken to the river and presented to the spirits of the water, for to the Malay—and this point must be insisted upon—there is a "natural body and a spiritual body" belonging to everything, and presiding over the rivers, forests, and fields are spirits numberless. The Malays, though Mohammedans, have ancient ideas of their own incorporated with their simple standard creed. The baby is carried in procession to the river, and, after various offerings have been made to the spirits and different ceremonies performed to avert evil influences, a casting net is taken up-stream, and a boy in the case of a male infant, or a girl in the opposite case, catches a fish, that ever after the infant may not stand in lack of piscine food. In Upper Perak (the part in which we were travelling) the baby itself and several small children among the spectators are caught under the net.

Children in Malay are sometimes called by un-

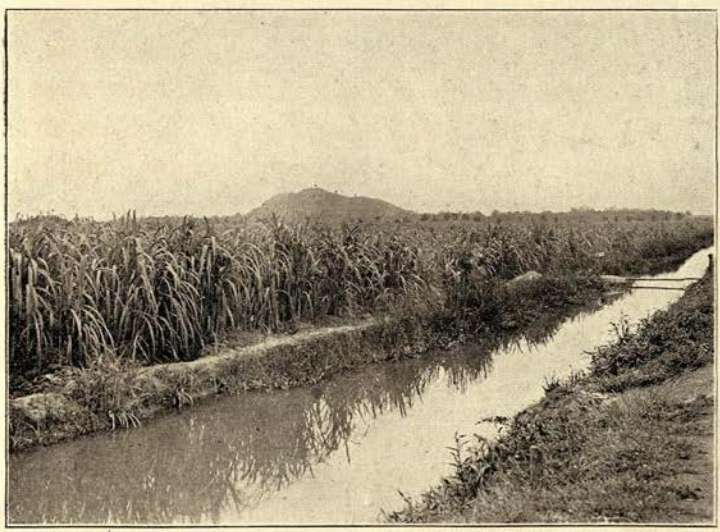
flattering names, such as "Ugly," so that the Devil and death may pass them over as not worth taking. This fact amused us somewhat, as we call our first-born "Ugly," though the reason in our case was simply that he was so excessively hideous when an infant. The sign of the cross is sometimes made on children's foreheads, and some people have told me that this is done to show the Devil that the child is his so that he will not hurt it. I doubt the accuracy of this, as I can find no trace of the cross ever having been a sign of evil. It is more probable, however, that the cross, having been a mode of punishment from time immemorial in the East, this emblem is placed on the foreheads of children to show that they are already marked by the cross so that they may be saved from its infliction. In this case it would be one of the many customs which have long survived their *raison d'être*, as crucifixion is not practised in Malay now. Again, it may be some other exceedingly old symbol, the veneration for which has died out and has even been forgotten.

Talking over these and many other things with Mr. Birch, we slowly oared our way down the river.

When we arrived at Kuala Kansa, we first visited the art schools, where Europeans are trying to keep alive and revivify the embroidery and metal work of the Malays. Their embroideries are mostly for the adorning of velvet bolster covers either end of which is worked. The stitch used



THE PENITENTIAL HAT
(Photo by Violet Clifton)



WHERE THE SUGAR GROWS GREEN
(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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is very like that employed for Church embroidery, and is done in pure gold thread. The silversmith's work found here is the finest example of that art which the East produces, being much more delicate than Indian or Chinese work. One very favourite silver article is a vase made to contain "sireh," a leaf used for chewing, which vessel often symbolizes the fate of a man; for, when a youthful suitor is visiting the parents of some girl whom he is disposed to marry, and they know that he wishes to find out whether they are favourably inclined to the affair, they will frequently have the delicacy to indicate their views by the position of the "sireh" holder. If the vase is upright, the suitor may venture to proceed; if, as if by misadventure, it has fallen, he knows that his hopes are vain.

We had lunch with some pleasant English people, by name Mr. and Mrs. Weld. They live alone by the river amid the most lovely scenery, and are engaged in planting.

We then proceeded to visit the first wife of the Rajah of Perak. The Rajah is guided by the British Resident, but has some real power, in public life, at least. In private life he has three wives. The first wife has a large house and garden, and is in some ways the favourite; she takes precedence of the others, and her son is Sultan in his turn. The second wife has a house which in its outward appearance and in the way in which the garden is laid out is precisely similar to that of the first wife; this is about a quarter of a mile

distant, and the Rajah's office is situated exactly between the two rival establishments. Rajah Permisuri spends seven days with each of these royal wives, and five days with his latest acquisition, a third wife, who is not royal.

The Ranee was most kind to us. We sat with her in a large drawing-room up a flight of stairs. It was furnished with stiff European chairs and horrible vases without flowers, and was in every way, save that it lacked spittoons, exactly like a "sala di reception" in South America, having precisely the same expensive ugliness and want of comfort. The Malays have, in common with Spanish Americans, an inability to discriminate between beautiful European articles and hideous ones, the latter being, unfortunately, much easier to procure. As the Malays have very little chance of seeing really pretty European things, this is very natural and excusable in them. A characteristic which they have in common with North Americans is their habit of asking one extremely personal questions on a first acquaintance, and supplying all such details about themselves to a passing stranger. While waiting for a train which they have gone overnight to catch (being always vague about dates and times), they would ask and give an enormous amount of such information, just as does the American, and, in a slightly different way, the Chinese.

Our royal hostess showed us a magnificent but terrible tiara that had been made up for her in

London, and then some beautiful native stuffs, called "Saris," woven in silk with threads of gold and silver. She possessed too some fine materials, which came from near Siam, but by far her most lovely ornaments were some old gold waist buckles, which were most artistically chased, part of them being made in dull reddish gold, whilst the relief was worked in designs of shining gold. In her rooms I noted the lack of washing basins, of which there is certainly but little need, since the Malays are always bathing in the river. There were wonderful beds, piled high with embroidered pillows and bolsters; and a Koran, in a cover worked with beads, arrested our fascinated gaze.

I asked our hostess if she minded her husband having other wives beside herself,[1] and she said that she and most other women whom she knew considered this an odious practice. Human nature had not been changed by custom in her case at least.

We then left this lady, with whom our conversation had been carried on through Mr. Birch, and motored a few miles farther to visit the wife of the heir to the throne, who lived in a one-storeyed bungalow, which was quite the most inartistic house I ever saw. The chief ornaments in the reception-room were two or three dozen china and glass hens, sitting on porcelain nests, and they formed the main part of a

[1] The authoress, it will be noticed, adopted the custom of the country in asking most impertinent questions at first sight.

German invasion of barbarous objects. There were covered cushions that had fine bead-work and embroideries on them, but the articles thus adorned were all so hideous in themselves that the effect of the work was quite spoilt. In one part of the room was a throne made of gilt cardboard and red paper, and huge Korans and paper flowers completed the scheme of ornamentation.

This throne and much of the festive display were the remnants of a feast at which thousands of people had assisted, namely, the circumcision of the son of the Prince whom we were visiting. The boy, having attained his sixteenth year, had had to go through the ceremonies, which in every family in Northern Malay are treated as royal, but which were in his case of course even more elaborate than is usual with boys of lesser rank. The river spirits would again have to be propitiated; then the heir would have to repeat his prayers in Arabic to show that his education was both efficient and complete (how like the stilted classical education of our best schools!). His mouth would afterwards be covered with glutinous rice, which a hen would then be encouraged to pick off—a very painful way, one would imagine, of pacifying the fates. Then, seated on a bag of rice or on a banana trunk, the actual circumcision would be performed in view of all the people, by the "Mudin," who, in the court of Perak, is a salaried and titled officer of state. The chiefs would stand round whilst this operation was performed, ready to kill him if he mismanaged it. The splen-

dour of these ceremonies is not entirely due to the performance of the boy's circumcision, this being but a part of the celebrations which take place in honouring also his arrival at years of discretion and the completion of his studies. Circumcision was primarily, in ancient countries, not a religious but merely a hygienic observance, for the prevention of disease and for the additional likelihood it conferred on those subjected to it of being the fathers of many children, large families having been always looked upon as of great importance in the East. Only in the time of Moses was circumcision practised in juxtaposition with religion, and eventually probably attained its extraordinary prominence in Hebraic ritual through a degradation of this religion, which turned more and more upon its ceremonial aspects. Finally, St. Paul, in mentioning it, regarded it entirely from this point of view. Mahomet neither ordained circumcision, nor did he forbid it, but its performance is looked upon by Moslems as an extra observance and grace. A curious point about this custom is that at one time and among certain nations it was practised upon children of both sexes.

Our hostess allowed us to photograph her, which we did in the flowerless garden beneath the blazing sun.

On returning to the house, where privacy is unknown, and where servants strolled about continually looking at us and talking, my husband noticed with discomfort that, owing to the excessive

heat wherever he sat a damp circle marked the velvet cushions which formed the seats of the chairs. Thinking it therefore about time that we took our departure, he bowed low over the Ranee's hand, and was dismayed to see large drops falling down upon it from his humid brow.

At this moment the heir apparent drove up in his motor, a cadaverous looking man, given to opium eating, and ruled by his wife, who, like the princess whom we had first visited, would never have tolerated his taking to himself another help-meet.

On our way back in the motor, we met a strange figure on the roads, whom Mr. Birch pointed out to us as being a man conspicuous on account of his high position and of his asceticism, who seldom spoke and whom many people considered to be mad. I had been informed, previous to our visit to Kuala Kansa, by Mr. Wilkinson (who knows more about the customs of the Malays than probably any other Englishman) that this distinguished person, whose identity I shall not reveal, is the spiritual Sultan of the Malays. The fact of his strange sovereignty is unknown both to Europeans and to the majority of the Malays, the very orthodox Mohammedan portion of whom would be prejudiced against his claim to this esoteric power; for Mohammedans, in common with most Christians, no longer seem to feel the need of any teaching save the exoteric. As in all else in Malay, the office of Sultan has its



OUR ROYAL HOSTESS

(Photo by J. Talbot Clifton)

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material and its immaterial side, and the office of the ascetic may be looked upon as belonging to the latter. It is he who has to propitiate the spirits and wrestle with the fates. He is an occultist, perhaps even an adept, though this is unlikely. He holds séances, where the advent of the unseen is first manifested by the flickering of a candle on the table. The spirits of all things are summoned by him, not only the ghosts of human beings departed, but also elementals and many strange inhabitants of another plane.

Notwithstanding my great interest in occultism and kindred subjects, I found the difficulty of seeing or hearing anything of this side of the life of the people almost insurmountable in so short a stay.

The Malays seem to be in touch to rather a remarkable degree with the planes just above and just below the one we know. It does not seem to lead them to much wisdom, and it makes them appear grossly superstitious to most Europeans; but sometimes it invests them with power, though mostly, it is to be feared, of a necromantic order.

In Java, Sumatra and Burma the possibility of men being transformed into beasts—and especially into tigers—is firmly believed in, and in Malay strange forms of lycanthropy are especially rife, and the wer-tiger is a beast whose existence the natives would not any more question than would we that of the London sparrow.

This idea of the transmigration of souls is the

basis for a curious game which is played in some parts of Malay, though in the more Europeanized centres it is disapproved of by the parents, and therefore is not often found. The pastime is, presumably, a form of hypnotism, and would be of interest to psychological students of the French School, but, unlike other hypnotic conditions, is more easily induced in children of weak wills or feeble minds than in normal boys; this differentiates it from European experiments. In Malay the game which I will now describe is looked upon simply as "possession," and is called *Hantu-musang*, *hantu* being the Malay word for "spirit" or "devil," and *musang* standing for "civet-cat," an animal which brings destruction to the fruit trees and the poultry yards of native villages. The moon is usually at her brightest when this game is played, and in her strange light the most feeble-minded boy is seated on the ground, and round his head a white cloth is tied, which sometimes covers him entirely, like a shroud. His eyes are closed by his playmates, and then, hardly breathing or swallowing, he is swung backwards and forwards till at last he appears to sleep. All the while the boys who encircle him sing in monotonous cadence spell-verses suggesting possession by the spirit of the civet-cat or by some other animal. The subject is discovered to be "possessed" when his feet grow cold, and then his playmates rush away from him whilst he pursues them furiously. If he is filling the rôle of civet-cat, they will imitate the cackling of hens and he

will follow them in strict accordance with the methods of the animal, the characteristics of which he has for the moment acquired. As a civet-cat he will climb trees and spring from branch to branch, far exceeding in agility and in fearlessness his usual capabilities. If he catches one of his companions he will bite and scratch him, and should a fowl cross his path he will seize it and devour it in a truly bestial way. He will not kick or fight with his hands, but will only attack with his teeth and fingers, and is indeed the civet-cat in all but outward form. Should he take upon him instead the nature of a goat, he will dash his head against walls and trees in an alarming way; and I have heard that, as an otter, he will plunge and dive into streams of water as he escapes from the other boys, who then pursue him instead of escaping from him. The boy is recalled to his human nature by the utterance of his name, but, should this be pronounced when he is, like a cat or a monkey, hanging in the trees, then disaster may occur. In Java the subject is, I believe, restored by blowing behind his ears, but this statement may not be correct, as it would seem to be very difficult to approach him. Lombroso wrote that by the swinging backwards and forwards of one's head it is possible to induce a state of drunkenness, and the dancing Dervishes and others (even including some religious revivalists) attain to a similar state by rotary movements. This wer-beast game does not therefore go beyond the limits of such mental states

as have been already observed, but whether the useful and all-embracing term of "hypnotism" will be the last word used for this extraordinary condition of beastlike obsession remains questionable.

CHAPTER XXV

DUSUN TUA

"The weariness, the fever and the fret,
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan."
KEATS—*Ode to a Nightingale.*

AFTER leaving Taiping, we went to Kuala Lumpur, which is a large and well-built town, where are many Englishmen engaged in various branches of business. A striking feature of this city is the great number of different nationalities which one sees represented there. This characteristic can best be studied in the English Club House grounds, where every Saturday a band may be heard and where cricket and football are played. The band is composed of Spanish-speaking Philippinos, and Malays come to listen to it; a Hindu gardener waters the flower-beds, whilst English children play about attended by trousered Chinese nurses; and over all this motley gathering a Sikh policeman keeps a languid eye.

Henry Belfield, the Resident, lives in a house set on a hill, and with him we stayed for over a fortnight. We had the pleasure of meeting the son

of the late Holman Hunt, who looks after the museum in Kuala Lumpur and who is specially conversant in entomology. His father, it appears, was a martyr to his art, for it was mainly by his great devotion to it that he impaired his eyesight to such an extent as to be almost blind during his latter years, his last picture, which is in his home, having strained them beyond recovery. On my return to England I was fortunate enough to see Mr. and Mrs. Holman Hunt and this wonderful picture, which is composed of so many figures that even the painter and his wife have not been able to count them. The subject thereof is the descent of the miraculous fire of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, received into the sacred lamp every Easter Day by the priests of the Greek Catholic Church. This miracle is the object of pilgrimages from all parts of Russia and Armenia and from other places where the Greek Church is paramount; and the strange multitude of picturesquely garbed devotees is vividly portrayed in the picture. This pious celebration often ends in a fight between believers and members of other branches of the Christian Church, who mock at this ceremony.

The museum, which young Mr. Holman Hunt has the care of, contains some weapons used by head-hunters in Borneo. These are made so as to kill the victim at one blow, and at the same time to deprive him of his head with a wrench.

The Botanical Gardens are quite lovely, as

are all the surroundings of Kuala Lumpur, about which lie hills and jungles and plantations, and near which is a golf course, an attraction which Taiping also possessed.

A few days after our arrival, we went by motor to Dusun Tua, a place at a distance of some forty miles from Kuala Lumpur, accompanied by Campbell, the head of the Botanical Gardens. We wanted his help in interpreting to the natives, and in sending them into the jungle to procure orchids for us.

Arriving at Dusun Tua, we found a charming Rest House. The river ran through the beautiful garden, which was scarlet with tall *clerodendrons*, which grow wild in the jungle. Dusun Tua owes its renown to its hot sulphur springs, which are diverted into two enormous baths. These were most delectable, especially perhaps after the perpetual cold-bucket-bath system, and we made much use of their healing waters, being both of us rather ill with severe chills which had long troubled us.

The headman of the village was sent for, and it was agreed that a Malay should go into the jungle with my husband and Campbell on the following day; also that the Sakais should be promised rewards if they brought us any orchids in the course of the next few days. The Sakais, be it said, are a people who inhabit the jungle, and are of another race and language from the Malays.

An enterprising Italian went to live among these

people to get rubber for trading purposes, and wrote a book about them which made me laugh more than any other volume I have ever opened, though other people seem to take it seriously enough. He describes therein his extreme terror on meeting the aborigines, and his continual fear of the wild animals of the jungle. He states that during the night it seemed as though hell were let loose, so fearful was the noise of the tigers roaring and of the selang, or horned buffalo, rushing madly about bellowing in search of something to kill; "for," says our author, "the tiger and the lion knew respect, but the selang knows none." His bump of veneration is nil; his murderous nature most prominent, apparently. The elephant and hippopotamus are also tearing about with the other beasts, and all in his immediate vicinity, until, our Italian says, the mere buzzing of a fly seems to him like a vibrating thunderclap. Of course, all these fancied noises must have been the outcome of hysteria, as beasts of prey would die of starvation did they hunt so noisily; besides which, there would never be such a quantity of wild beasts in so small a part of the jungle.

Anyway, Cerruti—for this was his name—became king of the Sakais, a people who never wash and who would not wade through a stream even if, by that means, they were enabled to avoid miles of walking to avoid the water. They play the flute with their noses, and leave their honoured dead on platforms in the trees. *Honoured* dead, I say,

because only the *na-halan* is disposed of in this way after death, other Sakais being interred in the usual way.' The *na-halan* is the wizard of the Sakais, their sole help against the many disincarnate powers and enemies who encompass them. He is a wizard who by prayers, incantations, and ablutions—which last mark him as extraordinary among this people who so abhor water—becomes at last the magnet for various spirits. At night he crouches in a narrow bee-hive, and gives to his followers who are grouped around it messages which they receive as oracles.

In Malayan life the tiger plays a curious part. A form of lycanthropy is associated with these beasts, as wolves are, of course, unknown. The *na-halan* is looked upon as connected with the tiger, which beast is expected to carry him away from his arboreal resting-place, and to release his soul through the torn and mutilated body. No expression of pain is allowed to escape the sorcerer as he dies, for any wavering or weakening would be scorned by the devotees, who, no longer looking upon him as superhumanly endowed, would withhold from the wizard the honour of tree burial.

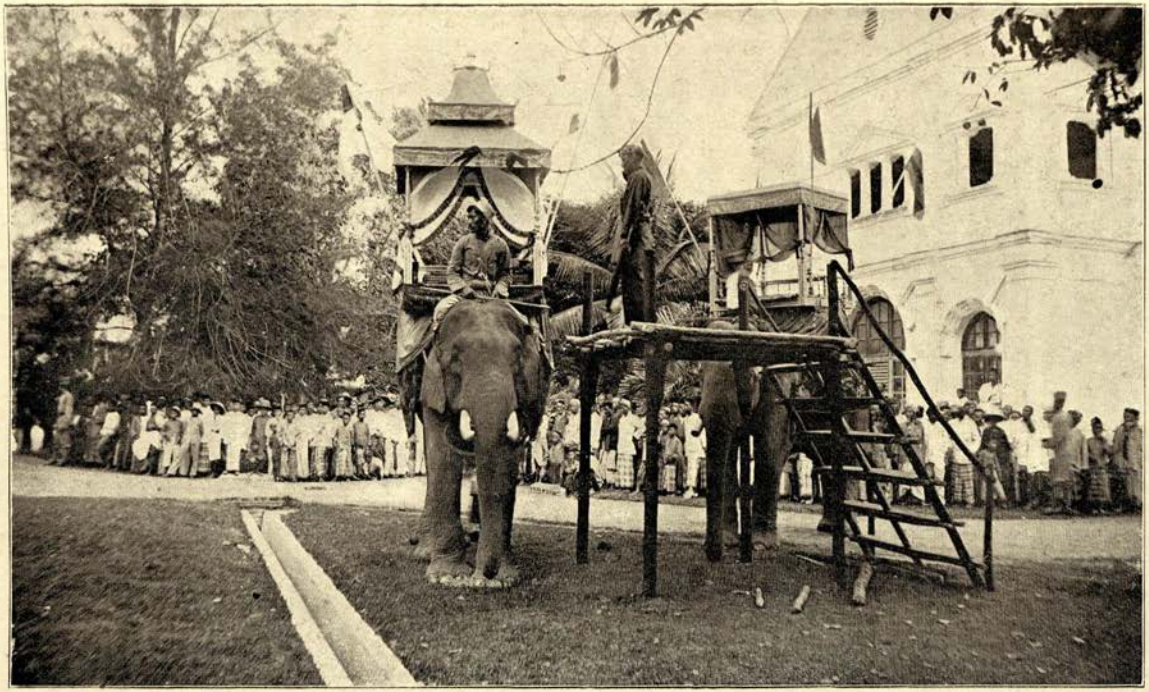
For the benefit of lovers of foreign bacon perhaps I may be permitted to draw attention to the fact that "home-fed porkers" amongst the Sakais are nurslings which the women feed from their own anatomy. (I have a photograph of just such a quiet domestic scene, but did not consider it suitable for the *beatus publicum.*)

Whether these pigs are afterwards eaten I know not.

A tribe of the Sakais, of whom we saw no representatives at all, and who inhabit another part of Malay, are even filthier in their habits than these of whom I have written, and are said to subsist chiefly on the vermin extracted from each other's heads.

At dawn the next day, the Explorer, Edward and Campbell went out to look for orchids, but Campbell had destroyed our illusions about the possibility of finding a black one, for this, he told us, was merely a sort of lily, and not an orchid at all. The hills rose up to 4800 feet, and were already being searched by natives sent by the headman.

This individual always blinked a great deal and looked very nervous, so, whenever he came near, I gave a sudden scream, pretending to imagine I saw a snake in the grass, or else I emitted a loud, sharp cough just behind him. The object of this strange behaviour was not to impress him with the idea that I was mad, but to see whether he had a form of mental instability which is called "latah"; so that my actions, which appeared stupid, were in reality scientific. To be "latah" is mainly confined to the Malays, as far as I could discover, though sometimes Chinese become so after a long residence in the Peninsula. A man who is "latah," will, on a sudden shock being given him, either imitate the person who has brought on this curious phase, or else will obey him blindly till he recovers. An old



ELEPHANTS OF STATE

Which have brought in a Royal Party to the Resident Governor's house at Kuala Lumpur.

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woman who is "latah" will, for instance, be startled by the sound of a bicycle bell behind her: she will then at once turn and run down the street, imitating as best she can the movements of the cyclist. Or, as another example—and a true one—an old native bore brings up a case before the court, brings it up many times, and never ceases to talk and argue upon it, till he wearies both the court and the judge. At last the temptation is too great to one who knows that he is subject to "latah." Inch by inch a heavy volume is shifted forward, and at last falls with a crash to the ground. "Run for your life!" his neighbour hisses at him, and the plaintiff flings himself out of the room and down the stairs, jumping the last three steps. Thus, running and leaping, the old bore is off. We were to have seen a woman in the hospital suffering from "latah," but unfortunately she got better, so we were not allowed to experiment upon her.

This "latah" must not be confused with hypnotism, but, as a doctor in Kuala Kansa told me, it is more probably a sort of hysteria, like St. Vitus's dance. This nervousness, in its incipient stage, is encouraged by the parents of Malay children, who show them off as the victims of an amusing peculiarity, and so increase the frequency of the attacks. Another doctor told me that, when the brains of "latah" people are dissected, they are found to have a slight sclerosis. Sometimes a man so afflicted will beg his comrades not to put him into this state, and, of course, this weakness often gives rise to cruel bullying, and even to terrible tragedies, an

instance of which I will cite. An Englishwoman travelling home with her child, took with her a Malay nurse, who was devoted to her little charge. One day on deck a passenger took up a soda-water bottle and hurled it overboard. The suddenness of this action startled the woman so much that it induced a momentary "latah," and she seized the child and flung it into the sea.

The Malays appear to be a people of deep feeling: their tendency to "latah" proves them to be nervous, and their other peculiarity of "running amok" also shows them to be highly strung. In this latter condition they are so uncontrolled as to reach the point of madness. "Running amok" is really usually a form of suicide, and the most intense expression of disgust with circumstances. The Malay, however, kills others, where the European would kill himself. British rule has of course decreased the frequency of these occurrences, for "to run amok" had become a sort of fashion, whereas now it is only a last resort. Say that a Malay loses his wife. He is filled with despair, revolt and fury; he sees red; he must vent his anguish on someone; he seizes his *kris;* he rushes out and meets a man. He feels that nothing can go on as before; the centre of *his* life is upset, why should the normal retain its ascendency in the lives of *others?* Therefore, he dashes at the man and kills him. It is good to hear the moan and see the blood. He feels that more pain and more gore are necessities to him: he becomes drunken with blood. He rushes from one person to another, and

usually ends by dispatching himself to the land of the ghosts he has engendered. It is all quite easy to understand. The Malays are entirely opposed to resistance, even if offered to tyranny, and scorn those who rise against the strong, even should they do so in self-defence; but yet against fate they admit as reasonable this crimson battle, this violent protest, which is expressed by the agony and death of others, and of their own also.

What is difficult to understand is the "running amok" (which term comes from the like fury that attacks elephants, though this is sexual at the root) of old women, or of mild, uninjured people; yet this does occur, and more often in Malay than in other countries; though, of course, unreasoning, unprovoked murders frequently happen also in Europe. I heard of a case in the Peninsula where the grandmother of a large family suddenly killed everyone in their hut. The only solution of these cases is a belief in the existence of disembodied beings. The extraordinary, fleeting strength of maniacs is not sufficiently accounted for by physiological reasons, for they perform feats of strength that no sane person could accomplish. Even a mother withheld from rushing to save her child could not battle against three or four men, as lunatics so often successfully do.

The terrible cases of a mother suddenly killing all her beloved babes, or of a husband destroying a wife he has always cared for, is explained by occultists as a result of either permanent or temporary possession by evil spirits, earth-bound, and

violent. It adds a terror to capital punishment, for the community, far from being protected by the death of the malefactor, is laid open to further outrages, which, though less evident than those committed during his life, may be even more terrible. However, I fear the day is far distant when judge or jury will find the resolution of many a daunting case in these simple facts.

Sir Frank Swettenham says, in one of his "Malay Sketches," that in an autopsy on a man who ran amok they found that the membrane on the right side of the cranium was more adhesive than is usual.

In a book by Sir Hugh Clifford, who knew the Malays by heart (as well as by observation), comes the following sentence, which plumbs the capacity for intense feeling which they possess: "From acute misery to despair, from despair to stupid indifference, he had reached the stage the Malays call "kaleh." Individuals have reached this depth through terrible punishments, in the times of their tyrannous rulers, when, shut up in cages like wild beasts, cramped, stricken, tortured, deprived of everything, cut off from the sun, they have at last sunk into the state of "kaleh," the bestial levelling down of man to lower than the ape, the fall in some short years of anguish from the heights attained above the animal through centuries of pushing onward. This terrible condition has been brought about by pain that has proved too much. Even the little Englander may allow himself to feel that the British protection in Malay is for good, in that it prevents, at all events

for the masses of the people, the fearful conditions under which they were reduced to this state of misery. The people of Malay at least realize it to the full.

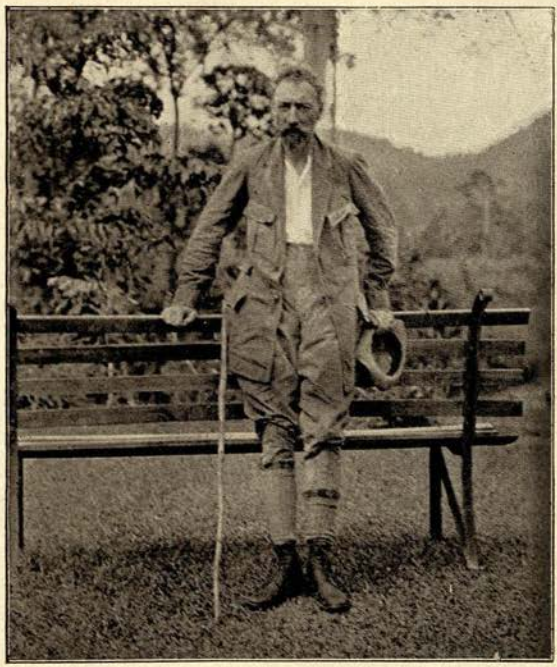
Our headman, however, resisted all the shocks I gave him, so, being left alone, I devoted my attention to the birds and butterflies. The latter swarmed about the stones, where ran some of the water from the sulphur springs. I saw two wonderful dragonflies, one of which had a red body and four black wings, and another which gloried in red wings and a black body. Amongst the feathered folk were many hornbills, with black and white bodies and long necks, whence proceeded very harsh and frequent croaks. I saw a jungle hen, but alas, no jungle fowl, which is said to be one of the finest-plumaged birds in existence. On the other side of the river monkeys played in the trees, and chattered merrily. In Malay there is a species of ape called the *macaque*, and these animals can be taught to go up the cocoanut palms and hurl down nuts to save their masters a stiff climb.

Almost the loveliest thing I saw in the jungle, during the Explorer's absence, was the *selajinella martensi*, a fern with a beautiful blue sheen behind its deep green leaf so that, when growing, it looks like mother-of-pearl or iridescent enamel, if one but lifts it where a sunbeam can light up its beauty.

After the orchid hunt Talbot appeared very weary and worn, and, taking off his puttees, gore

was seen to be flowing freely, and fat leeches (much smaller than those one buys of an English apothecary) fell off his legs. Edward, not being acquainted with these creatures, came hurriedly to Talbot and asked why he was bleeding, which he happened to be doing from several parts of his anatomy. With much laughter, the latter explained to him the reason. Having picked up the leeches from the floor—Edward not having yet got over the shock—I went to examine the orchids which the natives were bringing us. They consisted mainly of cymbediums and dendrobiums, the latter mostly botanical. The only other incident of the evening was that I lost a large sum of money by betting with my husband that the peculiar noise of the lizards on the roof is produced by their tails and not by their heads, but Campbell, to whom we sent Edward to ask, decided against me. I wonder if a lizard would eat a firefly, and if it would taste peculiar!

For dinner one night we had a real Malay curry, made in the village. It consisted of a whole fowl done up as a dry curry, with vegetables for the wet curry, and about forty odds and ends forming the "Sambal" or tray upon which some twenty little plats are prepared with pickled bamboo, raw fish, chutney, cocoanut, fruit and herbs. Malay is the land for such curries. They are positively scientific, and their makers very often enter into competition with one another as to which shall introduce the newest and most delicious things into the "Sambal,"



J. Talbot Clifton
After the orchid hunt, weary, torn, and bleeding
(Photo by Edward)

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the winner being awarded a prize. One of the secrets of Eastern curries is that the meat or fish used is always cooked in this way for the first time, and is not a réchauffé, as is often the case with the English messes dignified by the name of curry. Amongst Britishers in Malay the heavy native curry forms the chief feature of the Sunday mid-day meal, just as roast beef does in England; sleep afterwards falls on them, as it did on us after this feast.

We remained four days at Dusun Tua, but found no very interesting orchids, though we obtained several which we had not formerly possessed in our collection. The Sakais came down next morning empty-handed, that is, some people who were half Sakai and half Malay, but who lived more or less in Sakai fashion. They foolishly draped themselves in any rags they could get before facing our superior modesty, so that Edward was given orders to undrape them, as we wanted a photograph which would portray them in their habitual garb, which is practically non-existent.

One man brought down a blow-pipe made of hollow bamboo, some four or five feet in length, and ornamented with rude scratches, which were designed to represent the scaly covering of a snake, the spotted coat of a wild cat, or some other simple form or shape of nature's making. Having inserted into the pipe a piece of wood, cut finer than a match—which dart can be either poisoned or not, as may be wished—he then

added a small pellet of rolled-up feathery stuff; after which he blew through the pipe and struck a flower about ten yards distant, at which he was aiming, but afterwards missed a bird which had perched farther off.

CHAPTER XXVI

SINGAPORE

"Amongst the criminals executed here the other day was one convicted of robbery, whose share in the plunder was of the value of one cent (less than a halfpenny). As he went to his fate, he passed a shop where sheep's heads were hanging outside. 'How much are those heads worth?' he asked. 'Seventeen cents apiece,' answered the butcher. 'And mine,' said the wretched man, 'is only worth one cent.'—W. N. BEAUCLERK'S *Unpublished Letters from Pekin on Chinese Psychology.*

OUR next move was to the neighbouring state of Seremban, to the town of Negri Sembilam, and on the way there we stopped to make a short excursion into the hills, where we got some *cœlogyne panduruta*, which orchid bears sprays of green blossoms shaped like violins.

Edward was left at a Rest House in the plains, and there met an English hangman. Primed by me beforehand always to dissect the psychology of any strange person, he cross-questioned this man, who travelled about executing people, and who seemed to like his trade, at which he had been employed for thirty years. His wife had run away from him, and had not run alone. He had once had to go to China to execute a Christian missionary who was so beloved that no executioner in the country could be found who dared to inflict capital

punishment upon him. His crime had been the murder of his Chinese mistress, which was discovered through his selling her very valuable jewels. A strange history, for a white man who worked amongst the Chinese and gained their affection must have been heroically self-sacrificing; and yet, in spite of the fine qualities which he possessed, he was callous enough to try to make a profit by disposing of the jewels of one for whom he had cared, which seems even worse than having murdered a woman who may possibly have deserved to be harshly returned to oblivion.

We put up at Seremban in a disgusting Rest House, with torn mosquito nets round the bed. At dinner here we tasted the small, fat rice-bird, which is not particularly good.

The following day we motored to some tin mines, of which we took photographs. The object of most interest was a very old and beautifully carved wooden Malay house, which had been deserted for years. It was built on stakes, and we ascended to it from outside by means of a rough wooden staircase. The windows had shutters of wood, but no glass; and the roof, which was also made of timber, sloped down on either side. The whole of the outside was ornamented with carving, which gave it a very handsome appearance. Whilst brushing our way through the dirt and cobwebs to explore the dark interior, we chanced to discover, on opening a door, the body of a dead and decaying Chinaman, whom someone had murdered and been nasty enough to leave there!

Almanda grew here in great bushes, and the country was pretty, as it seems to be everywhere in Malay. On the smooth roads, quaintly-shaped waggons went plodding along, roofed like the old Malay house we had seen. Chinese coolies were working everywhere in the tin mines, and in connection with them we were told the most extraordinary true story I have ever heard, which proves that the brain of an oriental is removed by many millions of cells from the grey matter of the white man. I defy any European to understand the action, or rather want of action, of these four Chinese coolies, of which the following tale is told. They shared a hut, through the roof of which a man-eating tiger one night entered, taking away one of them, presumably leaving by the door, but that history does not relate. The second time he came he entered in the same way and made off with Chinaman number two, so far no precautions having been taken against him. The third time the same thing occurred; and it was only when there was but one Chinese left, and he saw that he must inevitably be the next victim, that he thought he had better take some steps to defend himself from the great beast. He therefore put a spike under the hole where the animal was wont to enter, and then waited in the cabin, apparently too inactive to seek another dwelling. That night the tiger, on entering, was staked on the spike and died. Necessity indeed is the mother of invention, but apparently a mother who labours long with her production when she is brought to bed by a Chinaman.

In summing up points in common, as well as divergences between the peoples inhabiting the places we have visited, I have noticed the following. The Burmese and the Nicobarese both organise opposing parties who fight those carrying and following a corpse when it is taken to the grave, in order to prove their unwillingness to allow the deceased to pass on his melancholy way. The Malays at the time of a marriage wrestle with the bridegroom as though to keep him from his mate; whilst the Andamanese bridegroom, affecting a shyness (which I have heard he really feels—so much so, that neither he nor his bride speak to each other for about ten days), has to be dragged to his bride, resisting strenuously all the way.

After leaving this most uncomfortable and expensive Rest House, kept by a German, and after having misspent several hours in going to and returning from the wrong port, much walking in the heat and travelling in trains, and much wiring to the mighty ones to help us through our difficulties, we got on board the ship at Port Dixon, which we had intended to take, the captain of which had been kind enough to wait for us; and then, after fifteen hours of pleasant calmness, we reached Singapore.

I asked questions, about the crew and other technical matters, of many of the passengers, for, as they were all dressed in white, I mistook them for ship's officers, which did not seem greatly to please them.

Our next destination was Java, the aim of our journey, the Philippines, having been abandoned,

partly through a certain surfeit of travelling, but mainly on account of the stork, which was pluming its wings in the land of to-morrow previous to again paying us a visit.

Lady Evelyn Hope, whose husband has an appointment in Singapore, was most kind to me, and we explored the Chinese part of the town and bought silks from Chinese merchants, stripped to the waist, which rather disgusted her, and appeared to me out of place in a shop, where somehow, through force of habit, one expects to find the attendants clothed. She told me a story of her brother, which I had previously heard, but which I was surprised to find was actually true. It happened thus. When big-game hunting in Malay, he climbed up a tree to await the coming of an elephant to the stream below him, where he knew it would drink and would water itself. The beast duly came, and he shot it. Soon afterwards a female elephant arrived with one young one, and with her trunk sought to revivify the fallen animal, but in vain. At last in despair she trumpeted, and soon many other elephants appeared. They stood round the corpse, and strove in many ways to induce a return to consciousness, but, seeing all their efforts were unavailing, they actually wept. They moaned and lamented, and shed great tears; in fact, the scene was so affecting that the hunter vowed never again to take the life of a tusker.

We went, of course, to the very interesting and beautiful Botanical Gardens, the Curator of which,

Mr. Ridley, is a most scientific man, who has named many plants and written books of reference on orchids in Malay. He agreed to let us buy some duplicate plants in the Gardens, and also promised that his men should pack any orchids which we might get in Java.

We were fortunate enough to meet also in Singapore the Curator of the Museum, in which building we happened on rather an amusing incident.[1] We found there a chair with a spiked seat which originally came from India, and was made in order that a Hindu fanatic might, in an access of fervour, allow himself to be carried round the town in it, during a religious procession, as a martyr to his idea of self-punishment. Talbot tried this chair, and found that, by resting his feet upon a board conveniently affixed to it, he was able to sit on the equally distributed spikes with very little discomfort. We therefore tested his immunity from pain by lifting the chair and carrying him round the entrance hall of the museum.

We heard from the Curator that there were some natives in Sumatra who were trying to demonstrate that pearls have life. This they did by enclosing them in small glass-topped cases, in which they also put grains of rice. After some months the husks of rice only would be found in the boxes, the grain having been eaten away. From this they asserted that pearls would propagate their species—a fantastic and most attractive idea, the practicability of

[1] I am not certain whether this chair was in another museum in the peninsula or in this one.

which he was considering. It seems just possible that the irritating portion of the oyster-shell, which the oyster, by covering it over, forms into a pearl, might be a microbe of sorts which could propagate its species, but it is to be feared that the product of these pearl-covered bacilli would merely be similar organisms and not, of course, pearls. Fascinating dream, that by means of two pearls, properly allied, one might in time propagate a necklace of gems! Pearls as parents! even Avarice in her noted dreams can have had no more glorious vision.

Before taking leave of the people of Malay, I must recall a peculiarity they have in inventing extraordinary etymological derivations, which would delight Max Müller, or any other scientist of that branch of the tree of knowledge. Take, for instance, the word "telegraph." Curiously enough, the Malay word for "line" or "string" is "tali," and "secret" in their language is "glap." They therefore think that the English have used the word telegraph as a combination of their words, denoting "secret line." Other similar words are as follows:—

Asparagus.....separoh kras	separoh = half kras = hard
Express train...kreta sombong	kreta = carriage sombong = haughty, proud because it runs through small stations!
Policeman.....mata mata	mata = eye eyes everywhere!
Motor car.....kreta hantu	kreta = carriage hantu = ghost } unseen power
Drink shop ...penchaus	punch house.

Java, and Home Through the Monsoon

To say the truth, I had conceived a few scruples with relation to the distributive justice of princes upon those occasions. For instance, a crew of pirates are driven by storm, they know not whither; at length a boy discovers land from the topmast; they go on shore to rob and plunder; they see a harmless people, are entertained with kindness; they give the country a new name; they take formal possession of it for their king; they set up a rotten plank or a stone for a memorial; they murder two or three dozen of the natives, bring away a couple more by force for a sample, return home and get their pardon. Here commences a new dominion, acquired with a title by *divine right*. Ships are sent with the first opportunity; the natives driven out or destroyed; their princes tortured to discover their gold; a free licence given to all acts of inhumanity and lust; the earth reeking with the blood of its inhabitants: And this execrable crew of butchers employed in so pious an expedition, is a *modern colony*, sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous people.

SWIFT.

CHAPTER XXVII

BATAVIA

"John Crow tink his own pickaninny white."—*Negro Proverb.*

We sailed for Batavia on the night of the 18th of June, and arrived there not long after midday on the 20th. We had joined *Wilhelm I*, a Dutch mail steamer on her way out from Europe; and never before have I seen such a merry set of passengers. They sat in clusters and drank beer all day, and on the last night we had a gala dinner, in which the "made dish" figured handsomely, and dry champagne was served like water; also souvenirs were given and speeches made. "It was a jocund company." I sat near a Eurasian, who told me he was a painter. His name, we will say, was "Binto," and of him I shall have more to say anon. He had a frightened-looking little wife with him and several babes, and they had all taken advantage of the cheap return ticket from Singapore to Java provided at this season, when the fare was only half the usual sum, and, in the case of some of the passengers on board, can barely have covered the free drinks.

The next day we reached Batavia. I noticed with surprise that, of the many husbands and

fathers who met the ship, none wore sun-helmets, and, on our return journey, I saw French women in Port Said with only thin veils on their heads, which proves that it is only the Englishman who is so "à cheval" on the subject of sun-helmets. One passenger cried bitterly on seeing her husband waiting on shore, and not with joy either, I think. I pitied her greatly as I fancied she must be the apologetic mother of a brace of two-month old babies—twins, who had been lying about on deck, netted into a big perambulator. I quite understood her terror at meeting her husband and being obliged to confess to having provided him with twins, for, I imagined, she had perhaps not dared to own to her "duplicity" before. However, it afterwards appeared that she was *not* the mother of these; that guilty woman, indeed, appeared to be quite radiant and in no way perturbed, this cheeriness being presumably her device for carrying off her mistake.

We entrained for the capital, Batavia, which lay within half an hour of the port, and there got into a "dos-à-dos," as the queer little conveyance drawn by a pony is called. The Hôtel des Indes was a comfortable hostel, and not so expensive as the one in Singapore, which, in turn, was much less dear than that in Rangoon.

We had a letter to an important English business man, and in his garden we saw the most magnificent *Phalænopsis*. He also kindly gave us tickets for the Military Club, that we might go and hear the music, which we accordingly did after dinner.

An excellent brass band played in the garden, the musicians being, of course, white men. It is unnecessary to remark that this, the only music we heard on our travels, was not on British territory. The waiters in the hotels are Malays, which is curious, considering that in Malay they are always Hindus.

The Dutch have a colonial system which is the absolute antithesis of the British *laisser-aller* plan. They do not allow Chinamen to work in the country districts of Java at all, and in the towns they may only do manual labour for each other. If one of them goes into the country, even for a day's work, he has to pay a fine.

Java is populated by Malays on the coast-line and by Soendanese in the hinterlands, who are a merrier people with a different language. In the other districts are the Javanese proper.

This island is the most thickly populated in the world, exceeding even England in this respect. The natives, whilst protected from foreign competition in the labour market, are forced to work hard to pay off the taxes, which are heavy. £1 is paid on an acre of rice, which would bring in perhaps about £5 a year. During five days in each month the natives work for the Government. Of course, the Malays are happier with no taxes than are the Javanese. The only reason for working which the former recognize is simply the necessity of sustaining life; in consequence of which they can have feasts and celebrations which last over a month, as all the work in the town and mines is done by

Chinese and Hindus. The Malays are, however, sinking into debt, through being able to borrow money for their feasts; and should the time come when, because of this or through contact with European ideas, they wish to work more actively in trades and industries which they now leave severely alone, they will find them filled with other peoples.

The streets of Batavia had many wide canals and fine avenues, with dendrobiums growing in the trees. After one night there, we hastened on by train to Buitenzorg, the Mecca of botanists, where is the Kew of the East, the wonderful garden of tropical plants.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BUITENZORG

"God Almighty first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of men."—BACON.

THE journey up to Buitenzorg was not particularly interesting or beautiful. The hotel there was fairly good, and our verandah overlooked a most lovely view, with a large river just below, in which the Javanese, real water-babies, laughed and bathed all through the day.

The Dutch in Java have a very different way of living from that of Englishmen in the tropics. To start with, they settle down and look upon the East as their home and their abiding city, and seldom or never go back on leave. Officials only get leave every ten or fifteen years. They send their children home for a short time, but otherwise they are entirely rooted in their colony. Also, not being much addicted to games, they work in the cool part of the evening, and lie down and sleep from one o'clock until almost four o'clock—a habit which we found most trying, as we often wished to see them during those hours on orchid and other matters.

They rise very early, and at midday have an enormous "rice taffel." The "taffel" at the hotel in Buitenzorg had twenty-four ingredients, and it

took ten men to hand it round. A soup plate and a flat plate are put before the guests. On the former one lays a foundation of rice, then comes the "restants" of the previous day, done up in curries; also fish, eggs, grilled chicken, ends of mutton, several vegetables, and many "sambals," all handed round on separate plates. Everything is mixed together on the soup plate and the overflow dish, and then this meesy meal is eaten. I thought it rather good, though I should not want it every day for ever. After this the women put on dressing-gowns and the men the native "sarangs" (even on board they do this); and then they rest or sleep till the day gets cool.

A few of them had to change their habits during our brief stay in the land, for we were hunting orchid dealers all through the day, We found two of them; one with a very uninteresting collection in his garden, redeemed only by a *Vanda Loweii* and a *Gramatophyllum grande*, of both of which we coveted large specimens, though a full-sized *Gramatophyllum* would almost need a special house. The other garden belonged to B——, a gentleman of mongrel race, who tried to charge us large prices. He noticed my husband referring to *Sanders' Guide*, which (as everyone interested in orchids and unfortunate enough to be obliged to buy them in England must know),[1] though most useful for names

[1] My husband, who has had much experience in buying orchids, recommends collectors to deal with Messrs. Charlesworth, of Haywards Heath. He found this firm more satisfactory than any other.



A JAVANESE GIRL WEAVING IN HER HUT

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of plants, is quite absurd as to prices, far less being stated there than is ever charged in England, in fact, about one-half only. B——, seeing this book for the first time, naturally imagined the prices there affixed to the plants would be very high; and so, thinking he would be business-like, he said, "I'll charge you half, then, of whatever is asked in that book." The result was that some valuable *Phalænopsis* cost about one shilling a plant. There was a slight *froid* ere long between us and him. We got some splendid *Phalænopsis tetraspis* and *violacea*, which were to be packed in "wardian cases" for us to take home. Dendrobiums, vandas, and gramatophyllums we took also from B——'s garden.

Most of our time at Buitenzorg (a word which means "Free from Care") was passed in the Botanical Gardens, where are the most magnificent avenues. One of them was formed of trees with aerial roots, giving the finest architectural effect I ever saw in nature. The other was of Canary trees, each one of which was girt with a different creeper, and was thick with orchids of every kind, the most wonderful being the *Gramatophyllum speciosum*, which sometimes bears three thousand blossoms at a time. The trees were magnificent in all parts of the garden; the *Amberti* I specially remember in its glory of red blossoms.

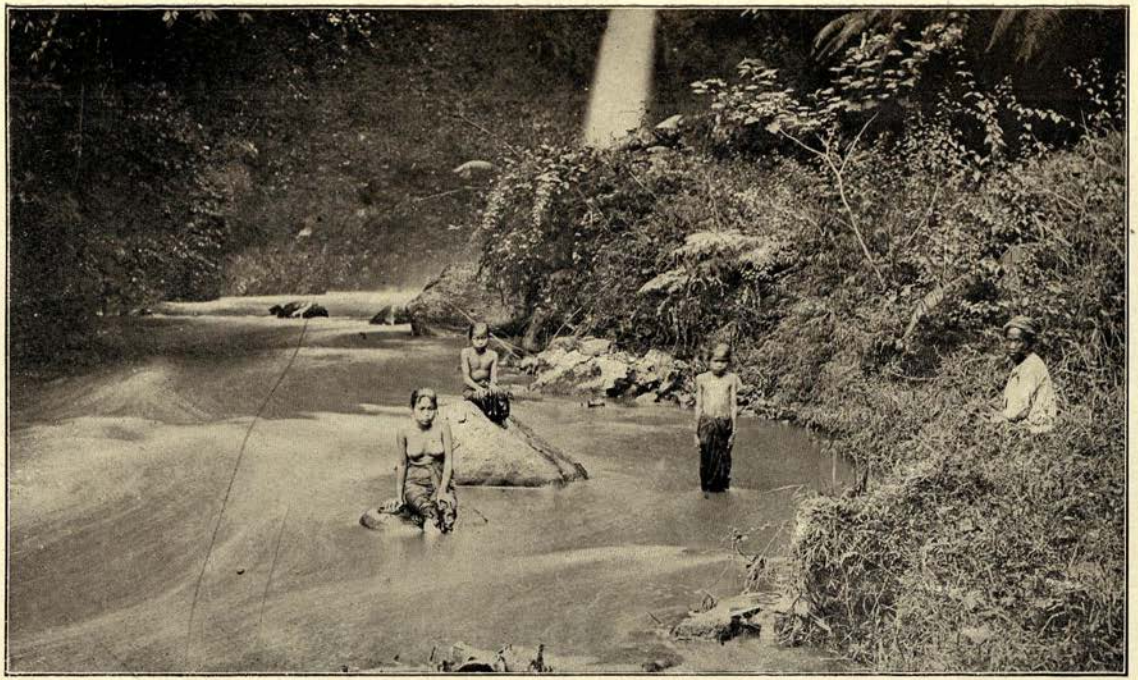
The Dutch Curator was very kind to us, and let us have several plants, for which we, on our return to England, promised to send him ondontoglossums

for the hill-garden, where these species, which originate from the mountains of Columbia, would be able to grow.

In Buitenzorg is a textile factory run entirely by women theosophists, most of whom, for no apparent reason, have short hair. It is strange that, in so small a place, so many theosophists should be gathered together. Some are English and others Dutch. These ladies have had put up in the hotel a most amusing notice, saying that materials with pre-lemurian and pre-atalantean designs could be bought from them—nothing modern or fashionable about these, I thought, and so went to see them. The patterns were not very startling, but, of course, one had had time to see them before, as being pre-atalantean dates them as having been designed previous to the existence of Europe, as Atalanta was submerged prior to the formation of this continent.

The fabrics were like those made in Borneo, being a sort of combination of silk and cotton, run through with gold and silver threads, the whole resulting in a rather stiff material which they made up into blotters, chair-backs, etc. I thought a dress of it would be handsome, so ordered some in blue and gold, with the trimming formed of a pre-lemurian pattern, worked in blues and pinks and mauves on a gold-thread surface. The result was fairly successful.

The "sarangs" used by Javanese women are quite different from the kind worn in Malay: they



VENUS BATHES IN SUN AND WATER

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are of cotton instead of being made of silk, and have large flower patterns, rather like a bathroom wall-paper, striking enough, though not strictly beautiful.

CHAPTER XXIX

GERVAT

". . . As a stranger, give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

SHAKESPEARE—*Hamlet.*

SEVEN hours and a half in the train took us to Gervat, and the views were more beautiful even than those which we had seen before. Here ranges of hills look down on rice-fields laid out in terraces for the purpose of irrigation, each terrace rising a little above the other. Parts of the Andes in Peru were cut out in this way under the Incas rule, and one still sees the fields that were thus superposed on the mountain sides. Here men and women work up to their waists in the mire, and the buffalo steadily plough their way through the water, which floods the fields.

Some of the country has tapioca, cocoanut, and banana plantations, but rice greatly predominates, and this is plucked by hand and gathered into bouquets. The labourers wear enormous hats whilst working in the sun.

We put up at Van Hirsch's very good hotel. The proprietor had a cageful of the most lovely

pigeons from many Eastern places, and these were strutting and dancing in front of one another, for it was the mating season. Outside the garden, "dos-à-dos," decorated with coloured bunting and flowers, were going through the town at a great pace, for it was also the marriage month before the great fast of Ramadan.

We repaired during our first afternoon to the bungalow of Mr. Voute, to whom we brought a letter from the Curator at Buitenzorg. This most charming man instantly dispatched natives to the hills, and when they returned, forty-eight hours later, they brought down six *Phaius* and fifty-three *Vanda tricolor*, which they sold us at five cents each, or about three farthings apiece—plants which at home would have cost as many pounds. Well satisfied that our trip was, on this account alone, a great economy, we packed them and the ants which infested them in large baskets to take to Singapore. (These plants, personally attended to by us on board, mostly arrived home alive.)

Whilst waiting for the return of the natives, we heard a certain amount about the Javanese. The picking of people's brains is often more productive of rubbish than even rag-picking would be, but we were fortunate enough to meet a young English-man, who had been planting for some years in Java, and he gave us some interesting information about the country. He said that quinine was practically a drug in the market (this is no pun!), which is owing to the lack of combination on the part of the Dutch, each one of whom—only rightly,

no doubt!—suspects the other. Opium-growing seems fairly promising, however. To demonstrate how enormously the Dutch make their colonies pay, I must mention that they send back to Holland annually two hundred thousand pounds sterling out of the profits of Java, and in addition have paid for the Achenese War in Sumatra, which has lasted for many years.

The Englishman told us also of some curious occult powers possessed by the Javanese. They hypnotize by touching a nerve behind the patient's ear, and restore him by blowing into the ear. They work themselves up by incantations and various movements to a certain state in which, like the Malays, they impersonate animals. Our acquaintance said he had seen a native who, through the process already previously described, was induced to take upon himself the characteristics of the pig. He made sounds precisely similar to those produced by that animal, and then was chased by dogs, from whom he escaped for a few seconds, running on all fours, and then suddenly turned round and bit one of them.

On a plantation this Englishman had seen the terrible vengeance the Javanese can work through their power of conjuring up malignant spirits. The manager of this estate had roused the enmity of the people, and suddenly his son became ill, seemed to relapse into a sort of coma, and finally became quite idiotic. It was noticed at last that, whenever he was at his worst, there was always a coat hanging up in a tree overshadowing the tent into which

he had been moved, which, even on a windless day, blew to and fro, and, upon this coat being taken down, the boy was freed of the obsession which had reduced him to the level of an animal. A French overseer on another estate, who was also terribly afflicted by delusions at certain times, continually asserted that he was bewitched, and begged for help by means other than medical. Had he gone away from the neighbourhood, he might have been saved; as it was, he was rapidly becoming worse.

I think myself that the evil was wrought by depraved low spirits in the plane below the one most of us have attained to, and that, in the case of the boy, the coat had been made a sort of magnetic attracting centre for them, by some natives on the estate possessing a certain power of black magic, who had concentrated malignant vibrations upon this garment. The boy, against whom all these evil thoughts were directed, completed the circuit.

The old objects of superstition, such as images of enemies formed like dolls and stuck full of pins, similar to those shown in Europe as remnants of mediæval times, are still seen in Java, and charms and counter charms are very usual too.

The Javanese might almost be called amphibious: they generally bathe three times a day, and the children can swim before they learn to walk. They are a happy people by nature, though overworked by the Dutch, who force them to toil so that they may be able to meet their taxes. Of course, most

Englishmen and apparently all Dutchmen imagine that there is merit in labour, *per se*, which is absurd —at least when applied to the Easterner. It is necessity which should make men work for money, and as a child of the tropics is supplied by Nature with all he desires, it seems ridiculous to blame him for not spoiling his life by pursuing wealth along unpleasant roads, as does a business man in England. We, at least, in our colonies do not enforce work; but the Dutch do, and benefit largely therefrom; and the Javanese are in consequence a healthy, busy race, but without perhaps the charming *joie de vivre* they should have as an inheritance in their lovely isle.

As we drove to the station, and took our last, regretful look at Gervat, I saw a man cutting grass in a most curious way. He waved round his head a light scythe, made simply of a sharpened bamboo, and thus in circular swings he shortened the emerald blades.

CHAPTER XXX

ODDS AND ENDS

"Simplicity is a law of Nature for men as well as for flowers. When the tapestry (corolla) of the nuptial bed (calyx) is excessive, luxuriant, it is unproductive.

"Linnæus says, 'Luxuriant flowers are none natural, but all monsters,' and so, for the most part, abortive, and when proliferous they but increase the monstrous deformity.'"—THOREAU.

THE journey back to Singapore, which lasted three days, being on a trading steamer, was rather a nightmare. Many spoilt children cried continually, and an Englishman caused one to blush all day long for one's nationality by appearing on deck in pyjamas, which garments he wore from eight o'clock in the morning till six o'clock in the evening. The Eurasian artist, "Binto," of whom I spoke before, as having been on board on our way to Java, had been forcibly persuaded to return to Singapore, whence he had escaped after defrauding the bank or business in which he was employed, and he was now on board with us. One felt very sorry for his poor little wife, with her small delicate children: she seemed so fond of the defaulting husband; and the sum was so small—I would have paid it myself,

but was told that his mother-in-law would do so, she being rich.

We had a few more days in Singapore, during which time we saw our orchids being repacked and bought some more of a dealer called Perlova, getting there two *Vanda Dearii*, one yellow and one white, and three *Loweii*. The latter are very beautiful, with spikes sometimes six feet long, but they did not live after reaching home.

Then we boarded the P. and O. steamer *Devanah* for our journey West. We had hoped to go to Borneo, but had had no news from there about our proposed visit. Alas! we had reached Penang when we got a letter from Rajah Brooke most kindly asking us to stay with him in Borneo. My husband had preceded his brother-in-law, De Windt, in several of the countries he explored, and knew the great traveller well; and it was owing to his having written to Rajah Brooke that we received this kind invitation. The Rajah's letter had been delayed, but, having booked our passages, we did not return to Borneo, a fact I shall always regret, though at the time I hardly felt well enough to wish to retrace any of our journey.

We somewhat dreaded the return journey, as the monsoon season was at its height. Between Singapore and Penang we ran into the worst "Sumatra" the captain had ever seen, the atmosphere being quite dense with tropical rain, but though a wind blew there was no sea. The captain, to whom navigation in this storm was anxious work, was very

uneasy, but as long as the water was not rough, I felt quite happy and contented.

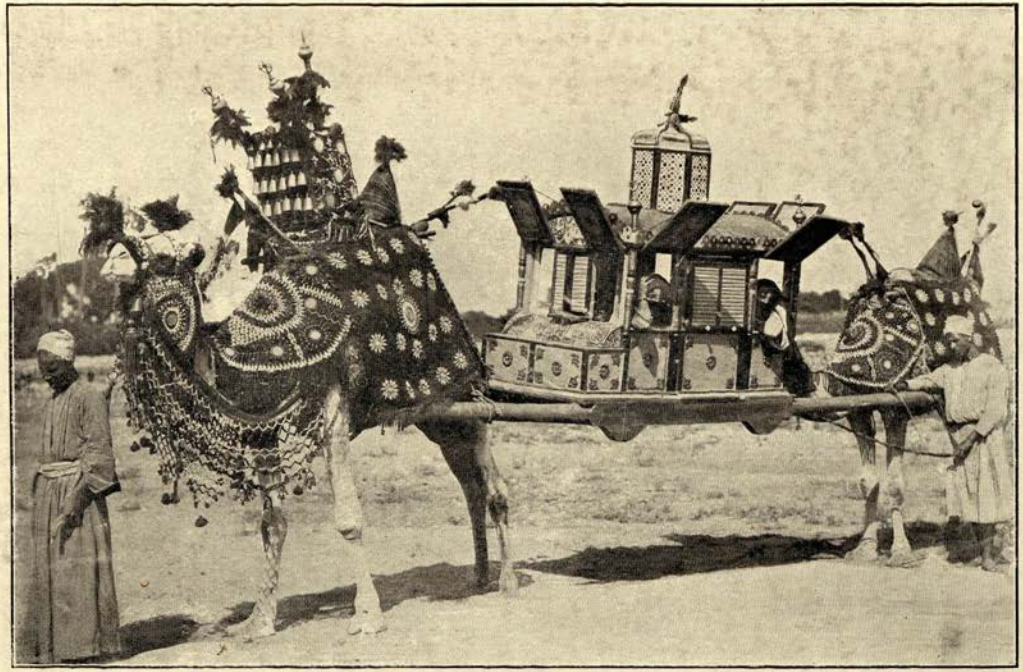
At Penang we collected some cane chairs and a couple of tables and made to ourselves a drawing-room on deck, where we fed and played chess and studied botany. Our park and gardens consisted of our orchids, of which several of the cabins were full, there being but very few passengers on board. The *Vanda tricolor* which I had found at Buitenzorg was in blossom all the way home. I had had it taken off a tree in the garden of the hotel there, and it was a most exquisite specimen, consisting of seven distinct parts, with trails of deliciously scented flowers. We had flowers to wear every day, and Edward watered the plants in the cabins. The "wardian cases" were on a small upper deck, to which we ascended daily at the risk of our necks, the ladder being so very steep. In fact, having sent home most of our boxes before us, our only luggage seemed to consist of orchids. Travelling light is the secret of enjoyment. One may not look smart, but one is free, which is the better part. It must have seemed as though we had contracted strange habits from the aborigines, thus returning with leaves instead of with clothing.

Up to Colombo three days of discomfort marked our homeward way. In that island the edict has gone forth that no more orchids are to be taken from the jungle, but at a dealer's we got a beautiful *Vanda Roxburghii* in full bloom, with seven or eight spikes of spotted, wedgwood-blue flowers,

deliciously perfumed. The dealer sorrowfully yielded to our enthusiasm, backed by our purse, and cut off a great bit of his tree, whereon hung the wonderful plant. Some *Dendrobium Macarthii* from Colombo also gladdened our collection.

Six days intervened before we reached Aden. Big seas washed over the deck, and the record roll was about thirty degrees. One night a mighty wave stopped the ship perceptibly for some seconds and washed away thirty steps of the gangway and some of the side rails. Excited Australian women rushed about and rang their bells furiously, and sent for the purser and the doctor. On previous voyages I have noticed that women do this when nervous, apparently thinking that the purser can somehow prevent the loss of their valuables and the doctor that of their lives in the event of a shipwreck. The almost incredible part of the occurrence was that exactly the same thing had happened to that same ship on the same date at the same place a year previously.

Then we reached Aden, the dry atmosphere of which, after so much damp, was quite exhilarating. I made use of some of the shining hours by learning to make Turkish coffee from the naked Arab chef of the hotel; and we bought about fifty pounds of it from off the camels coming from Mocca. I have ever since been famed for my good works in this direction. We bought a special Turkish grinder, which reduces the coffee almost to a



MARIAGE À LA MODE AT ADEN

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powder; then a spoonful of this mixed with an equal quantity of sugar is put into a metal holder, into which is poured boiling water. When the whole is boiling, it is poured into the cups. One should not be able to drink more than about half the contents of the cup, the rest of which ought to be composed of the dregs. Half a pound of coffee is sufficient to make about forty cupfuls.

We attempted going to the waterworks, but as the carriage broke down three times en route we returned on foot before we had got very far. Talbot thought the whole thing had been prearranged, but should have occurred later on in order that the driver might blackmail us when far out in the country.

The next day was quiet and breezeless, with a temperature of about ninety degrees. As the conversation turned incessantly upon the very obvious heat, and everyone grumbled, which was intolerable, we made them most irate by insisting that it was quite cool. Several of the men in the stoke-hole were taken up unconscious. Poor souls! it would have been excusable for them to have grumbled. The nights were abominably hot, and one's pillow got soaked, and one's hair was as though one had washed it. High seas swept over the people sleeping on deck. I slept on the floor of the cabin in the vain hope of a draught.

The Canal was, of course, very hot, but it always fascinates me. I wanted to land and go across by

train through Cairo and so rejoin the ship, but unfortunately no connection is arranged for between the trains and the mail steamer.

At Port Said I will ring down the curtain. There we landed and wandered about the native part of the town. The women dress in black, monk-like garments, and wear curious bamboo and gold fixtures in their noses. The Explorer, when a youth, fell ill there, in one of the hotels, which were then mere gambling, cut-throat sort of hostels. He managed to survive, and escaped the men as well as the microbes, which was a miracle. "The Devil looks after his own." Often when inclined to be nervous, either on my own account or on his, I have said this to myself, and found therein a certain consolation.

Port Said is the most cosmopolitan of towns, and somehow it excites the imagination — the bad music, the hawkers, the strange human flotsam and jetsam of the place make one feel subtly that it is one of the most godless and wicked spots on the globe.

. . . . . .

Thus ended our orchid pilgrimage, our devout journey to the shrines of the most wonderful flowers on earth—that great family the branches of which, like the archangels, the elements, the rainbow colours, and the basic notes of music, number seven —the heavenly numeral. They have their offspring in the fields of England, in the cold high

mountains and the burning jungles of South America, they brighten vast parts of Siberia and lighten the untrodden morasses of the Andamans, they are offered to the gods in Burma, and bring the Christian natives of Panama to their knees before the *Peristeria elata*, wherein is the likeness of a dove, in which they see the true symbol of their faith. Wonderful flowers that grow on the earth and in the trees and on the rocks of a hundred countries in a hundred climes!

In one species alone, the *Cypripedium*, there are three thousand varieties. Do you wonder now that they bewitched us, and that we travelled some twenty thousand miles to see them in their homes?

They are the last-born of the flowers, the most evolved kind. They are so fine that even an iris looks coarse beside them; like those flowers, they most of them have a beautiful iridescent and crystalline sheen on their petals.

Many of them have wonderful scents, some purely delightful, others like sandalwood, fruit and aniseed. They are built on the mystic number three, having three petals (including the lip), and three sepals, all coloured, instead of being green as is usual with other flowers. Instead of having pistil, anthers, stigma, style and ovary, all in separate parts, their organs of reproduction are joined into one portion, which is called the column; and this is the chief means whereby you may always know an orchid from another flower.

Some of them—the *Cynoches chlorochilon*—are

shaped like fairy swans, and coloured like an aquamarine: others resemble butterflies, birds and bees. Some seem to be made for the musician, having black bars inside them on which melodies might be written. Their intelligence is almost human, and is bent entirely upon their varied devices for the continuance of their species. The orchid, like the woman, bears the seed for nine months and then the pod is matured and the new life is given to the light. Stranger still, like certain hysterical women who have been known to suffer from that baffling physical anomaly, the "phantom tumour," when they develop all the symptoms of pregnancy, which symptoms are, however, fictitious, so an orchid will often, by displaying a fine pod, lead one into hoping for a further specimen, but the pod will ultimately prove to be sterile and devoid of seed.

People so often say that they do not think orchids natural, and regard them as exotic, evil and abnormal; yet orchids are in truth wild flowers, growing absolutely in a state of nature, and less dependent on matter than any other blossom, as they live upon air and rain. Their construction is absolutely simple and perfectly adapted to their needs, and its distinctive feature is that every individual species has its own special way of attaining to the one aim of every growing thing—reproduction.

Most orchids contain both male and female attributes, though a few plants have flowers that are of only one sex.

The beauty of their names also leads one into realms of poesy. Amongst other lyrical designations, *cypripedium* is derived from "Venus's slipper," this flower being shoe-shaped: whilst *Lycaste* is yclept after the virgin daughter of a king of antiquity. They are all known by beautiful Greek and Latin names, such as Aurea, Alba, Rosa, Odoratum, which touch the imagination like notes of melody, recalling Rosetti's lines :—

"Whose names are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys."

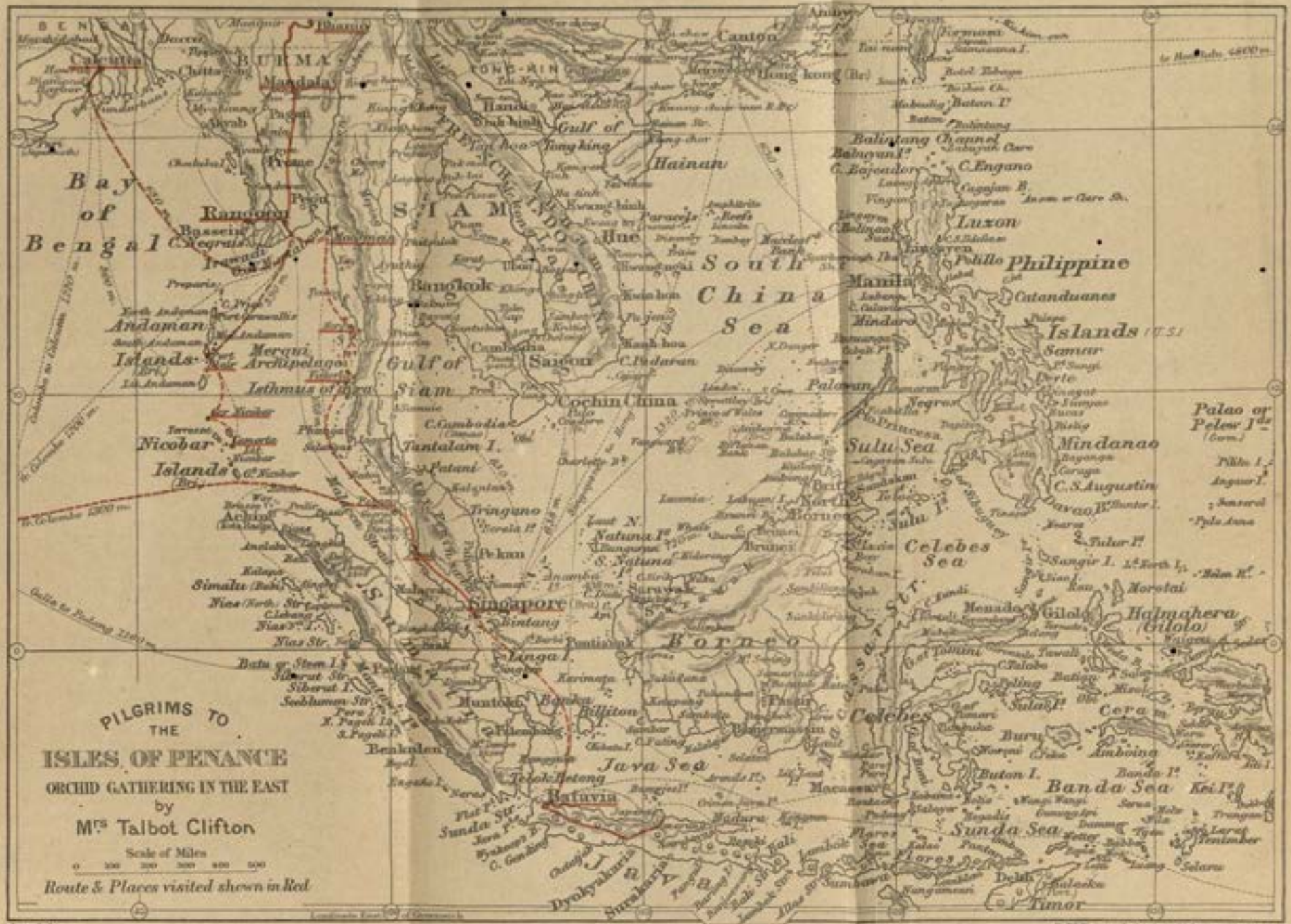
To the Reader

In case the Reader has not ere this had "to shut the book and sit him down and die" with boredom, I wish to thank him for his condescension to my want of skill in having read to the end, and to draw his attention to the fact that I also have made a concession to his human frailty in that, instead of naming this book *The Orchid Pilgrimage*, as I wished to do, I called it, in order that it might be popular with him, *Pilgrims to the Isles of Penance;* for I knew that whilst he would probably not care for a book the title of which breathed of flowers, he would undoubtedly favour it did the title savour of sin.

To my Pen

"Oh! Nature's noblest gift, my grey goose quill,
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
Torn from *my* parent bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men!"

Byron.



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